# The Women's March Movement on Facebook: Social Connections, Visibility, and Digitally Enabled Collective Action

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all the courageous women I know and will know in the future. The ones who are determined to pass the torch of knowledge, the ones who inspire, the ones who empower, the ones who nurture and support, and the ones who are fearless in their fight for a better tomorrow for everyone.

Abstract

Since the Arab Spring of 2011, scholars have debated the efficacy of social media in facilitating offline collective action. This dissertation seeks to fill a gap in that literature by examining the role of social ties in determining intention to participate in collective action. Using a mixed methods approach involving statistical analysis of survey results and in-depth interviews, this study examines how the Minnesota chapter of the Women's March in opposition to President Donald Trump used Facebook to engage and mobilize supporters. Findings show that aspects of tie strength such as reciprocity, duration, affect have different impact on intention to participate in high- and low-cost political actions. Similarly, the publicness of supporters' political action on Facebook has differing effects on intention to participate in collective action depending on supporters' tie strength with the chapter. Findings from this study have practical implication for social movement organizers seeking to energize, grow, and mobilize supporters using social media.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the Arab Spring uprisings, there has been interest in studying the role of social media in collective action. In the United States, a country with a long tradition of social movements, what distinguishes these newer forms of movements from their predecessors is the shift away from formal organization-led organizing to informal grassroots-led organizing (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). With a "click," people who are interested or curious about the cause can follow activists or "like" an organization on social media, enabling social movement organizers to quickly spread mobilizing messages to their online followers or supporters (Chadwick, 2013). Social media has thus made mobilization and membership building less costly and complex, allowing ordinary citizens to organize without the resources and organizational infrastructures that characterized conventional or traditional social movement organizations (Chadwick, 2013). Indeed, social media sites that were originally created for nonpolitical functions have become politically powerful (Tufekci, 2017).

Existing research in the field has largely shown social media's positive relationship to and facilitation of participation in collective activities to advance the goals of social movements (Boulianne, 2015; Hsiao, 2018; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014; Zhang & Lee, 2018). Referred to as collective action, these political activities are undertaken by social movements with the intention to achieve a common goal aimed at social change and improving conditions for a group of people who share a common identity (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002; Flanagin, Stohl, & Bimber, 2006; Mercea, 2016; Postmes & Brunsting,

2002). Collective action is often conceived as involving a range of activities that includes large scale activities such as protesting, striking, or demonstrating to individual acts such as letter writing, donating money, voting, or petitioning to advance the goals of a social movement (Margetts, John, Hale, & Yasseri, 2016; Postmes & Brunsting, 2002; Klar & Kasser 2009; Wright, 2009; Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). By mobilizing large numbers of people for political activities, collective action is undertaken to address discontent within society (Weber, Dejmanee, & Rhode, 2018).

Of the growing number of studies that focused on the ways social media have facilitated participation in collective action, much scholarly attention has been paid to the structural level of networks and its role in collective action. One strand of existing research has focused on investigating network size, density, and composition on social media, particularly for acquiring resources and building social capital for participation in civic or political activities (see Choi & Shin, 2016; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Son & Lin, 2008; Tang & Lee, 2013; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009)[1].

Another strand of research, which has come to dominate the field in recent years has focused on information networks and content that are typically centered on hashtags (e.g. #BLM, #Ferguson, or #YesAllwomen), tweets, blogs, news sites, social media groups, or users. This strand of research examines either network structure effects or message frames on specific forms of political action, with the majority of research focusing on street protests and demonstrations (see Bastos, Mercea, & Charpentier, 2015;

[1] These studies have focused on network size, density (e.g. sparse or dense), and composition (e.g. homogeneity or heterogeneity) and their impact on social capital.

Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Clark, 2016; Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Freelon, Mcllwain, & Clark, 2016; Gonzalez-Bailon, Borge-Holthoefer, & Moreno, 2013; Jackson & Welles, 2016; Lee, 2018; LeFebvre & Armstrong, 2018; Lim, 2012; Papacharissi, 2015; Tufekci, 21017; Veenstra, Iyer, Hossain, & Park, 2014; Zhang & Lee, 2018).

Frequently referred to as connective action, this line of research focuses on street protests that are comprised of physically decentralized networks of loosely connected individuals who are linked together by their shared political interests and use of social media rather than membership to formal associations or organizations[2] (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Harlow & Guo, 2014; Howard, 2002; Kavada, 2015; Margetts et al., 2016; Mercea, 2016; Rolfe, 2005; Tufekci, 2017; van Laer & van Aelst, 2009; Weber, Dejmanee, & Rhode, 2018). In these types of grassroots-led organizing, networked technologies such as social media serve as an "organizing agent" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 752). Oberschall (1973) explained that the necessary condition to ignite a social movement is dependent on the presence of an "infrastructure that can be used to link members of the aggrieved population" into an organized campaign of mass political action, and that "movement participants are recruited along" these lines of interaction among the aggrieved population (in McAdam, 1982, p. 44). In this sense, social media is the 'infrastructure' that links people of the aggrieved population into an organized base of mass political action.

[2]These types of crowd-enabled networks are characterized by personal political action where messages are typically centered on personal expressions that are shared over social media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Examples of connective action would be the BlackLivesMatter, Occupy Wall Street, and the #MeToo movement.

Often developing "out of personalized reactions to political issues" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 17), individuals join social causes by finding common ground in personalized political actions such as hashtag or digital activism where they express their indignation in personal ways rather than employing messages or themes determined by formal organizations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). These types of collective action are typically characterized by low-cost and high-speed digital mobilization, and often involve protest activities that are characterized by little to no formal organizational involvement or coordination (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, 2013; Margetts et al., 2016).

Although interest in information networks has dominated the field in recent years, there is a lack of theoretical work associated with such studies. Due to the descriptive nature of many such studies, much remains unknown about the underlying mechanism that can explain social media's role in activism. This has led scholars such as LeFebvre and Armstrong (2018) to conclude that as communication scholars, we have "yet to reach a stage where we can confidently draw conclusions" about the interaction among social media, collective action, and users "within the online sphere" within social movements (p. 13). Since much remains unknown, the use of social media for promoting collective action to advance social movement goals is not without its critics.

Contemporary digitally enabled social movements are often characterized by its decentralized networks of participants and organizations. While decentralization has its advantages, such as information and resource diffusion, it also has challenges that might limit the persuasive power of such movements. The decentralized nature of digitally enabled movements could potentially lead to fragmentation or internal division of groups, as Zhang and Lee (2018) found in their study of the relationship between participant-

initiated and movement leaders' Facebook pages during the Umbrella movement in Hong Kong.[3] The array of individual or small group-based actions that arise because of decentralization could potentially redirect resources away from the movement. Rather than support the movement, decentralization can lead different groups to focus on their own collective action and messages instead of helping spread the core message of movement leaders, which could potentially limit the persuasive and mobilizing power of the movement (Zhang & Lee, 2018).

In addition to potential challenges presented by decentralization, social movement scholars such as Morris (1984) contended that "successful social movements usually comprise of people who are willing to make great sacrifices in a single-minded pursuit of their goals" through spending time, money, and effort (p. 4). However, the ease with which people can participate in activism on social media has concerned many scholars. This is because underlying critics' arguments is the perception that offline participation requires greater sacrifices and therefore higher commitment to the cause (Hsiao & Yang, 2018).

Therefore, social media has been criticized for promoting "Slacktivism" or "Clicktivism," a contemporary form of activism that threatens to replace offline forms of activism such as protesting and volunteering with virtual liking, sharing, or clicking, which are often considered a lazy or inferior form of activism (Gladwell, 2010; Lane &

[3] In analyzing the relationship between 138 participant-initiated Facebook pages and the pages of the movement leaders on Facebook during the Umbrella revolution in Hong Kong, Zhang and Lee (2018) found that there were limited mutual interaction between the groups. The general lack of connections between the pages, as Zhang and Lee (2018) found could be problematic for movements that seek to have a cohesive message and action.

Dal Cin, 2017; Morozov, 2009). Several scholars have argued that relying on social media to spread mobilizing messages does little to boost offline participation and may even end up inhibiting meaningful offline participation intended to affect change (Christensen, 2011; Harlow & Guo, 2014; Lane & Dal Cin, 2017; Kristofferson, White, & Peloza, 2014; Vissers, Hooghe, Stolle, & Maheo, 2012).

According to these scholars, social media appears to facilitate mobilization based on shallow commitments and superficial relationships due to the ephemeral quality of online participation (Gladwell, 2010; Earl, Hunt, Garrett, & Dal, 2014). In a PBS interview, scholar Tufekci explained that although success of social movements is often measured by the size of the protest, social media has made organizing large groups of people within short spans of time easier than before (Frazee, 2017). Hence, attendance in marches or protests does not necessarily equate to commitment in the movement, unlike movements of previous decades where large-scale marches often reflect years of growing dissent and long-term organizing on behalf of the cause (Frazee, 2017). This is because social media has disrupted or inverted the mobilization process wherein the "first step in a broader movement" often begins with a large-scale street protest rather than organizing at a local level (Frazee, 2017, para. 16).

Van Laer (2010) pointed out that one of the enduring questions about the effectiveness of social media that is still open for debate is whether participation in political behavior "mediated through digital information channels" such as social media can indeed be channeled into "real sustained commitment" to the cause (p. 413). Today, the role of social media in movements is still a contested topic (Kavada, 2015) and whose role is still being examined (see Hsiao, 2018). As such, several scholars have called for

more empirical investigation to explain the role and impact of social media in mobilization and activism (Bastos et al., 2015; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014; Harlow & Guo, 2014; Penney & Dadas, 2014).

**Contribution**

Therefore, this dissertation contributes to the existing literature by examining the impact of social media in a more systematic and theoretical way, namely drawing from research in the social movement literature that has shown the importance of social ties, which are distinguished into weak and strong ties, in mobilizing people for collective action. Therefore, a focus on social connections within social media sites can provide a useful conceptual framework in explaining the contribution and limitations of social media in collective action. Although not a dominant area of research within the field, interest in social ties as an explanatory factor in promoting collective action through social media is growing. Several studies have investigated their role in promoting collective action. However, the extent to which these studies have attempted to test the impact of social ties on collective action is incomplete and inconclusive due to measurement issues.

The first measurement issue is the lack of consistency in studies that measures both strong and weak ties. Although there are a few studies that have examined the impact of both weak and strong ties on collective action, these studies have either assumed tie strength based on the types of social media examined[4] rather than directly measuring social ties (see Valenzuela et al., 2014) or conceptualized tie strength based on

[4] Friendships on Twitter is assumed to be composed mostly of weak ties whereas friendships on Facebook is assumed to be composed mostly of strong ties.

pre-determined social categories such as friendships or familial relationships (see Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011). Other research examined the impact of weak ties (see Chan, 2016, Choi & Shin, 2016; Tang & Lee, 2013) or strong ties (see Nekmat, Gower, Gonzenbach, & Flanagin, 2015) but not both. Even in these studies, with the exception of Nekmat et al. (2015), tie strength was assumed based on the types of activities users were engaged in or the groups they were connected to[5]. Due to the lack of actual or consistent measurements of social ties, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of strong and weak ties on collective action within a social media environment.

The second measurement issue lies with the similar lack of consistency in how participation in collective action is measured in extant research. In a meta-analysis of current research on social media and participation, Boulianne (2015) found that despite scholarly interest in protest activities (e.g. marches, demonstrations, rallies), current literature has provided "little clarity about the effects" of social media on protest participation (p. 534). This is largely because majority of the research that Boulianne (2015) examined used composite indexes that combined different political activities such as participation in marches or demonstrations, talking to public officials, volunteering for a political party, and voting within the same index. This measurement approach limited the ability to parse the effects of social media use on core protest activities such as street protests and demonstrations (Lee, 2018).

[5] For instance, users who engaged in a lot of informal socializing (Choi & Shin, 2016) or had connections to public political actors were assumed to be building weak ties (Tang & Lee, 2013; Chan, 2016). Nekmat et al. (2015) measured strong ties in terms of level of closeness users felt towards those who they interacted with on Facebook.

Furthermore, while there is growing consensus in the field that social media is germane to protest participation (Bastos et al., 2015; Boulianne, 2015; Hsiao, 2018), a form of collective action, not much is known about social media's impact on other forms of collective action. This is because existing scholarly attention has largely focused on street protests, often overlooking other forms of political participation. Despite focusing on street protest participation within their own research, scholars such as Hsiao (2018) acknowledged that compared to other types of political participation, street protests involve higher personal costs as protesters often risked incurring bodily harm by law enforcements. The different amount of perceived costs associated with a political activity or protest-type activity affects participation. As van Stekelenburg (2013) explained, some forms of political action involve little cost or risk such as signing a petition or donating money, as compared to striking or occupying a site.

As such, the distinction in levels of cost associated with each type of participation would likely require different variation of the dynamics underlying different forms of collective action (see van Stekelenburg, 2013). Since social movements rarely rely on only one type of collective action, current scholarly interest in protest participation does not paint a complete picture of the mechanism needed to mobilize people for other forms of collective action. Since it is not a current trend in the field of communications to examine participation beyond protest activities, scholarly research that examined a broader range of collective action are often lacking in their consistency of measurement. Often, their conceptualization of participation is not similar. For instance, some studies have measured participation in terms of civic participation (see Choi & Shin, 2016; Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004) whereas others measure

participation as both political and civic participation (see Gil de Zuniga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). As such, attempts to build theory are lacking due to these measurement issues.

**Research Questions**

Indeed, not enough is known about the underlying mechanism regarding social media's impact on the different types of collective action. For instance, many scholars have argued that online forms of activism disseminated through social media can lead participants towards offline forms of collective action that involves greater personal effort such as street protesting (Bennett, 2003; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Papacharissi, 2010). Others found that the frequency or usage of social media predicted or encouraged offline forms of collective action such as protest participation (Chan, 2016; Hsiao, 2018; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013). However, what is it about the use of social media that makes it a gateway to offline collective action? And how effective is social media in helping social movement organizers mobilize supporters for offline collective action? These are promising areas that await empirical scrutiny.

A possible explanation lies in the features of social media that are "conducive to creating connection with others" as well as "mobilizing collective actions" (Chan, 2016, p. 18). Studies have pointed to specific features of social media in contributing to collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Bennett et al., 2014; Mercea, 2016; Papacharissi, 2015). Indeed, social media has increased the speed through which networked individuals can communicate, amplify grievances, and engage with one another (Shirkey, 2011). For instance, Facebook groups allow strangers with similar

interests to find one another online. The ease with which one can connect with strangers on social media, based on shared goals and beliefs, has led many social movement organizers to use social media to connect and build relationships with supporters.

The ease with which social movement groups can connect and build relationships with sympathizers and supporters on social media is an important factor for mobilization. This is because studies have shown that having a social connection to someone involved in social movement organizations or participated in political actions in support of the cause increases the likelihood of individual participation in the movement (Saunders, Grasso, Olcese, Rainford, & Rootes, 2012; Schussman & Soule, 2005). In their study, Schussman and Soule (2005) found that individuals who were asked to protest by someone within the movement were far more likely to do so than those who were not invited to participate. Importantly, they found that individuals who were invited to protest by others within the movement tended to belong to social movement organizations, as these organizations provided opportunities to protest. These social connections with social movement organizers and their supporters are also known as social ties.

The importance of social ties between social movement groups and their supporters is a key factor in mobilizing supporters for collective action (McAdam, 1982; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Through organizational membership, organizers and supporters can foster interpersonal ties, which can be activated for mobilization (Klandermans, 1997; McAdam, 1982, Schussman & Soule, 2005). Although the positive relationship between political participation and social ties to social movement groups has been consistent in the literature, the traditional idea of organizational membership requires rethinking with the increased use of social media by movement groups. With

social media, “membership” in a social movement organization can be easily forged with a click by “liking” or “following” a Facebook group, unlike in the past where being a member or supporter involved signing up for newsletters, paying dues, donating, or attending monthly meetings. Supporters of the organization interact with others online, receive mobilizing messages from the Facebook group rather than meet physically at meetings, and receive information through accessing the website.

With contemporary social movements that were started online through Facebook or Twitter, typically by ordinary citizens rather than formal organizations, these grassroots organizers rely heavily on social media because they lack the resources and structures (e.g. office space, paid staff, members meeting, member or donor database) that typify formal nonprofit organizations. Hence, the idea of ‘belonging’ to contemporary grassroots organizations is a “far looser concept” than traditional forms of membership (Margetts et al., 2016, p. 48). The shifting definition of a member or supporter, especially for movements that are digitally-enabled born online requires more scholarly attention. Although the importance of organizational membership in social movements has been supported in the literature, much is still unknown about the effectiveness of contemporary grassroots organizations that exist mostly online, with little face-to-face interaction, in forging social ties with their supporters using social media.

Indeed, the features of social media has often been credited for enabling contemporary social movements. An affordance of social media that is believed to contribute to collective action are features that make social media users’ actions visible to those within their online social circles. Halpern, Valenzuela, and Katz (2017) explained

that the term ‘affordance’ refers to the inherent properties or functions of a technology that allows its users to do something with it (Halpern, Valenzuela, & Katz, 2017). The visibility of these actions has been shown to pressure users to engage in collective action (Haenschen, 2016; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Margetts et al., 2016). The proliferation of grassroots movements that rely heavily on social media in recent years has shown that social media can inspire, motivate, and even pressure people towards collective action because of two interconnected reasons – facilitating and leveraging new and existing connections within the user’s social network, as well as features that broadcast user’s actions to the user’s personal social network. Social media sites are mainly designed to help users establish and maintain social ties with other people (Choi & Shin, 2016), and they do so through multiple features that can facilitate the mobilization of users for collective action.

Therefore, this dissertation research is primarily interested in examining the role of social ties and visibility of action in mobilizing social media users for collective action. As previously mentioned, at the heart of the dissertation research is the question of whether social media can assist social movement organizers in motivating supporters for collective action through building and maintaining social ties online. Specifically, this dissertation research is interested in whether strengths of social ties between social movement organizations and their supporters on social media will affect participation in different forms of collective action. Additionally, this research examines whether the visibility of actions by social movement supporters on social media influences the relationship between social ties and collective action on social media. The goal of this dissertation research is to further explain the role and effectiveness that social media play

in mobilizing people for collective action. It builds on existing research on collective action by combining two streams of research that have been studied independently of each other – the sociological concept of social ties and communication research into social media.

This study is organized into seven chapters. The next chapter provides an overview of existing scholarly research that examines the role of networked technologies in contemporary social movements. It focuses specifically on the concept of strength of social ties and visibility of action, a key social media affordance, and their dual impact on different forms of political participation within a digital networked space. The third chapter introduces the social movement of interest and explains the significance of the Women's March movement to this study. This chapter provides justification for choosing the Women's March Minnesota chapter and its Facebook page to investigate the impact of social media on the movement. The fourth chapter discusses the methodological approach, providing details about the interview preparation and questions, coding process, and findings. The fifth chapter details the survey questions, design and procedure, and measurements. This chapter also highlights the descriptive and summary statistics as well as the statistical results. The sixth chapter situates both the interview and survey findings within the broader literature and discusses implications. Finally, the epilogue chapter discusses limitations of this study and offers directions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review on Social media & Collective Action

Existing research has documented the role of social media in helping to facilitate collective action. Studies have found that social media sites contribute to collective action by their ability to reduce participation costs, promote collective identity, foster and strengthen a sense of community, and allow activists to control message frames (see Agarwal, Bennett, Johnson, & Walker, 2014; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Bennett et al., 2014; Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Harp, Bachmann, & Guo, 2012; Jackson & Welles, 2016; Kharroub & Bas, 2015; Mercea, 2016; Papacharissi, 2015; Poell, 2014; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015; Varnali & Gorgulu, 2015).

Importantly, digital connectivity afforded by networked communication technologies has allowed people to fulfill pre-existing political desires more efficiently, making it easier to mobilize and sustain large spontaneous collective action (Tufekci, 2017). In fact, when comparing social media users and non-social media users, Chan (2016) found that social media users were more likely to engage in political and protest participation. Indeed, without the aid of social media it would have been much harder to engage in the type of "large-scale, immediate and unmediated" communication among protesters and activists that have come to characterize recent digitally driven social movements (Youmans & York, 2014, p. 71). Unlike social movements predating social media, digitally enabled movements do not need to spend a lot of time and effort to build their organizing capacity before mobilizing people for large-scale collective action such as a protest or rally. Instead, through "adhocracy," which are tasks that can be

"accomplished in an ad hoc manner" because of social media, contemporary movements are able to scale up quickly without requiring much resources (Tufekci, 2017, p. 53).

The types of large-scale, grassroots-led social movements that have flourished since 2010 were possible because of social media's affordances that blend private and public spaces of communication. Features such as "like," "retweet," "share," "mention," and tags that publicize social media users' preferences and beliefs to a wide audience on social media "blur the boundaries of private and public, home and street, and individual and collective action," thereby increasing exposure to content that enable collective action (Tufekci, 2017, p. 26). Hsiao and Yang (2018) explained that social media users' aggregated acts of posting, retweeting, and sharing produces a "crowd-sourced organizational structure" that can mobilize resources and respond to events (p. 2).

Through these features, social media users learn about issues and express their views online. This increased exposure to issues as well as the opportunity to comment on them makes the social media environment conducive for collective action. Several studies have found that social media use for the expression of opinions was positively and significantly related to participation in activities such as protests, rallies, demonstrations and volunteering (Choi & Shin, 2016; Valenzuela, 2013; 2014). Users who frequently used social media to express their views were more likely to exhibit higher levels of participation compared to those who did not frequently express their views (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2014).

Social media also allow users to interact and engage with others outside of their personal social networks (Valenzuela, 2013). Many scholars have argued that it is this interactivity feature inherent in social media that has facilitated participation in various

types of collective action (Chan, 2016; Choi & Shin, 2016; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012; Gil de Zuniga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014; Hsiao, 2018; Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2014). This is because this interactivity facilitates the diffusion of conversations and information throughout networks of interconnected individuals who may or may not know each other. Rather than limit information and conversations within tightly bounded communities of like-minded individuals, social media features facilitate the spreading of information to different communities of people. To further explain, information and discussions are no longer constrained within dense networks of like-minded individuals and communities but can now cut across geographical boundaries because of social media.

Through social media features such as hashtags, sharing and retweeting, commenting and mentioning, social media users can create connections with strangers outside their personal social circles to collectively discuss issues, express opinions, and share information within the same digital space (Varnali & Gorgulu, 2015). Features such as "liking" and tagging friends in conversations facilitate increased interactions between users, and when applied to political issues, can increase users' exposure and knowledge about politics (Hsiao, 2018). As individuals feel more confident about their political knowledge through interactions on social media, they may feel more confident in their ability to participate in political actions (Delli Carpini, 2000; Hsiao, 2018).

Researchers have identified interactivity on social media as a key facilitator of collective action. Through discussions and interactions on social media sites, users can discover one another based on shared grievances, goals, and political ideology (Papacharissi, 2015). It is this social interaction between users and activists in which

information is quickly and easily transferred between the core of influential users (e.g. organizers, activists) to ordinary users that led to the successful mobilization of protesters during the 2011 wave protests in Spain (González-Bailón, Borge-Holthoefer, & Moreno, 2013). Therefore, users who engage with large social media networks can keep issues salient and debate ideas and strategies that sensitize and politicize other members of the network.

Studies show that such debates can persuade network members to accept the legitimacy of the cause and embrace collective action as an appropriate form of strategy to achieve social movement goals (Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Bond, Fariss, Jones, Kramer, Marlow, Settle, & Fowler, 2012; Diani, 2000; Hooghe, Vissers, Stolle, & Maheo, 2010; Thackeray & Hunter, 2010). It also allows users to feel like they are united, an important factor in building a sense of community or collective identity, one that is considered essential to sustain collective action (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Khazraee & Novak, 2018; Penney & Dadas, 2014; Tufekci, 2017). Even if supporters are unable to participate physically in street protests, social media allows them to stay engaged and feel as if they are participating in the protests in real time through live feeds of the protest or through hashtag participation (Clark, 2016; LeFebvre & Armstrong, 2018).

As such, social media can foster and accentuate collective identity by connecting users to other like-minded individuals, creating opportunities for them to support each other and participate in message creation, which can politicize and motivate individuals to act offline (Alberici & Milesi, 2013; Boulianne, 2009; Khazraee & Novak, 2018; Postmes & Brunsting, 2002). Tufekci (2017) explained that “dissidents and minorities” often draw “strength and comfort from interactions with like-minded people” because of

shared experiences of injustice, prejudice, and opposition from society (p. 9). Hence, through social interactions with movement supporters, organizers, and activists, social media can facilitate user identification with social movement groups (Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008). Studies have shown that the cultivation of group identity is important for social movements because the more people identity with the social group represented by the movement, the more likely they are to engage in political participation for the group (van Stekelenburg, 2013; Wright, 2009). This is because social group identification is "accompanied by an awareness of similarity and shared fate" with those who belong to the same group, and the stronger the identification, the more motivated people are to participate in the movement (van Stekenlenburg, 2013, p. 227).

While social group identification such as racial, class, or gender identity is important for participation in collective action, several scholars have argued that identification with a politicized group is a stronger predictor of participation in collective action. One such example of a politicized group identity is feminism, which Duncan (1999) explained is "an ideology that values political action" and group membership in a movement that emphasizes collective action "means opportunities for active involvement" (p. 623). For instance, Nelson, Liss, Erchull, Hurt, Ramsey, Turner, and Haines (2008) found a strong relationship between feminist identity and collective action and that women who identified as feminists were found to be more likely to get involved in collective action than those who do not. The more politicized the group, and the more the individual identities with the group, the more the group norm of political participation becomes important to the individual. Van Stekelenburg (2013) explained that the "more

weight this group norm (of political participation) will carry" and it will result in an "inner obligation to participate on behalf of the group" (p. 277).

Social media is apt at facilitating the formation of politicized group identity because users do not always know each other and can only see each other's comments and online profile. Hence, there are fewer cues that identify social media users as individuals. Spears and Lea (1992) noted that in many social media networks, the only psychological connection between participants is the knowledge that they care about the same social movement. This is particularly true for sites that are built around shared interests or experiences rather than personal networks such as Twitter and Facebook groups. This can lead users' self-concept to shift from a personal to a politicized group identity (as cited in Alberici & Milesi, 2013). Consequently, the importance of social media to social movements via reinforcing and cultivating collective identity to the social movement should not be understated.

**Importance of social ties on social media**

Social connections can be powerful. As Cottle (2011) aptly explained, the "demonstration of people power is contagious," and when it is diffused through social media, "it can inspire and empower others to act" (in Kharroub & Bas, 2015, p.7). The reason information related to the social movement can be quickly diffused online is because of social ties that are connected online. These personal connections play an important role in connecting unaffiliated but sympathetic social media users to activists or supporters involved in the movement or cause, thereby exposing them to opportunities for collective action. Furthermore, involvement on social media ensures that supporters

remain in constant contact with the cause on a day-to-day basis, which can sustain their commitment (Passy & Monsch, 2014). Importantly, the propensity to be mobilized is dependent on users' social connections within social media (Clark, 2016; Lim, 2012; Passy & Monsch, 2014; Tang & Lee, 2013; Veenstra et al., 2014).

Several studies have turned to social connections on social media sites as predictors and explanations for social media's role in collective action (see Nekmat, Grower, Gonzenback, & Flanagin, 2015; Valenzuela, 2013). After all, social media sites were created for social connections such as fostering new ties (e.g. finding people with similar interests or ideology), developing, and maintaining pre-existing ones (e.g. relationships with acquaintances, colleagues, friends, or family). And for most people, the social relationships on social media include relationships with people with whom they share strong-ties such as close friends and family members as well as with people with whom they share weak-ties, such as acquaintances and colleagues (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Therefore, social media sites can reinforce social relationships by keeping users updated on what is going on in the lives of people they know.

The importance of social connections or interpersonal ties have often been identified as an important factor in mobilizing people for collective action (Armstrong & Mahone, 2016; Liu, 2016; McAdam, 1982; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Passy & Monsch, 2014; Tang & Lee, 2013; Wood, 2015). For instance, several scholars who studied the civil rights movement have noted the importance of social and familial ties in connecting church congregation, students, and supporters with wider networks of churches and activists within the movement to mobilize them later for collective action (Chafe, 1980; McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984; Ransby, 2003). As McAdam (1982) described, rural

southern blacks were often tied to major civil rights organizations by individuals from local communities. Church ministers often played that role or notable individuals such as Ella Baker, an activist who worked for national organizations but traveled extensively and developed close connections with local people involved in community organizing (Ransby, 2003). These individuals were key to disseminating information between the local constituents of the movement and the national and regional organizations. Van Stekelenburg's (2013) study of why migrants protest despite expectation to assimilate into their host culture, corroborated previous empirical work on the importance of social ties to collective action participation. Particularly, his findings confirmed that people were more likely to participate in collective action if they knew someone who were either sympathetic or involved in the movement.

Social ties therefore play a key role in collective action, and its impact is clearly seen on social media sites. The connectivity of social media creates links between activists and participants, allowing them to share information (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Kavada, 2015), much like social movements predating the digital era, but at a much faster speed, with less geographical constraint, and resources. For instance, in a survey of Hong Kong citizens, Chan (2016) found that of all the direct effects, Facebook connections with public political actors (e.g. political groups, organizations, government officials, political commentators, or activists) exhibited the strongest relationship for participation compared to other factors such as using Facebook for news, network size, and use for opinion expression. Chan (2016) also found that Facebook users' network

size[6] had a direct effect on political protest, which he suggested was because more social connections provided more information and opportunities for protest participation.

While network size is not the focus of this dissertation research, Chan (2016)'s findings demonstrated the importance of social ties with public political actors on collective action. This is because social connections to activists and social movement groups provided the "knowledge and expertise" needed for users to "become engaged in ways" they might not be previously exposed to (Gil de Zuniga et al, 2012, p. 322; van Stekelenburg, 2013). Chan (2016)'s findings of larger online network sizes, connection with political actors, and their positive relationship with political participation supported previous findings by Tang and Lee (2013), and Gil de Zuniga and Valenzuela (2011). In fact, the current empirical literature on social ties to social movement supporters as "one of the strongest predictors of individual participation" in the movement has been fairly consistent (Schussman & Soule, 2005, p. 1085).

People who knows someone who is active within the social movement are more likely to participate in collective action on behalf of the movement compared to those who do not (Klandermans, 1997). Social media sites can inspire collective action because they utilize "social relationship as the mobilization agent" and deliver calls to action based on such relationships (Liu, 2016, p. 619). These social relationships on social media sites are the catalyst for information diffusion, and trust and loyalty built through these relationships provide individuals with the motivation for collective action (Klandermans et al., 2008; Liu, 2016). Therefore, participation in collective action,

[6] In Chan (2016)'s measurement of network size, he measured the number of friends they have on their Facebook profile, which did not consider strong or weak ties.

especially actions that are contentious, should be understood as "developing through social interactions" (Schussman & Soule, 2005, p. 1097).

With the exception of a few studies, current communication research that examined social ties and their relationships to collective action have focused on either weak or strong ties, but not both. Measurement issues related to how participation[7] and social ties are measured in the literature may have also contributed to conflicting findings about the impact of weak and strong ties on collective action. Such issues have limited the ability to draw conclusions about their effects. Despite that, current studies suggest that weak and strong ties may have different roles in the mobilization of collective action.

***Weak ties on social media: Informational resource***

Research on participation in collective action has demonstrated the power of weak ties (Granovetter, 1983), especially in mobilizing people for social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, and protests during the Arab Spring. As noted by Veenstra, Iyer, Hossain and Park (2014), protest events have traditionally been organized by formal organizations and are typically dependent on "social proximity and interpersonal" ties as well as face-to-face deliberation and discussion (p. 66). In today's digital media age, where social media is seen as the central organizing agent in several contemporary high-profile protests such as the Occupy Wall Street and Ferguson protests

[7] Some studies define participation as both civic and political activities, others measure it in terms of political activities or civic engagement. Most of these studies rely on a composite score to determine participation or civic engagement. Others measured participation in terms of protest involvement. Then there are others who refer to participation as collective action, whereby the purpose of participation is to help advance or achieve the goals of a cause or movement. Also in these studies, activities that make up collective action are often measured as a composite score and tend to be a variation of activities that are used in political and civic engagement measures.

(Bennett & Segerberg, 2013), some scholars have argued that participants appeared to be mobilized by weak ties rather than strong ties.

In recent times, studies that examine social ties have tended to focus on weak ties, arguing that social media makes it easier to stay connected to their weak ties, enabling the spread of information and mobilizing messages that make large-scale protests possible. Tufekci (2017) explained that it would be much harder to maintain relationships that are not close without social media, arguing that those weak relationships would have faded or involved much less contact if not for social media. And for activists seeking political change, utilizing weak ties to spread information is especially important (Tufekci, 2017).

Recent studies found evidence supporting the power of weak ties in mobilizing people for collective action and civic activities (see Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Son & Lin, 2008; Wood, 2015). These studies argued that having a lot of loose social connections allow social media users to obtain a diverse range of information that increases awareness to social issues, exposure to political information, persuasive messages, and mobilization attempts or opportunities for participation in collective action beyond one's networks of close family and friends (Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Tang & Lee, 2013; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil De Zuniga, 2012). Margetts and colleagues (2016) explained that what determines the success of online political campaigns is not the size of the initiator's social network, but rather the presence of an adequate number of ties who are "starters with low thresholds" needed to perform the action (p. 193). The more people who participate in an online campaign, the higher the chance of drawing in participants with "higher thresholds," through the availability and dissemination of social information among social connections (Margetts et al., 2016, p. 193).

Tang and Lee (2013) also found that social connections with public political actors on social media, which one can assume to be a weak-tie relationship, is a significant predictor of political participation. They argued that social media can promote or encourage collection action by facilitates building of weak-tie relationships with activists and public political actors. In addition, Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela (2011) found that discussion with people in their weak-ties groups (e.g. coworkers and acquaintances) on social media was more predictive than discussion with people in their strong-ties groups (e.g. family and friends) to lead to political participation. This could be because referencing and commenting on one another's messages on social media allow users to comment on social issues in public ways that cross ideological differences as well as help spread the goals of the cause (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Wood, 2015).

Indeed, without weak ties, it becomes difficult to spread information beyond the clique of close ties because "weak ties are far more likely to be bridges" linking otherwise unconnected clusters of people together, which can be helpful in information diffusion needed to mobilize people for collective action (Granovetter, 1983, p. 208). In other words, weak ties are more likely to act as a bridge, providing new information "from disparate parts" of the social system (Krackhardt, 1992, p. 216), and therefore play important roles in information dissemination (Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Tufekci, 2017). This is particularly true when an individual's network of weak ties is made up of groups of people different from the individual in terms of demographic markers or connections to important people involved in the cause or movement (Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Tang & Lee, 2013).

Although Tsatsou (2018) did not intend to focus on the role of weak ties in the Sunflower Movement, a series of street protests and demonstrations led by student and civic groups in Taiwan, her study suggested the importance of weak ties in disseminating information vital to the movement. Through interviews with students who participated in the movement, Tsatsou (2018) found that the "information-spreading and information sharing affordances" of social media such as Facebook aided in public engagement and the recruitment of new protesters (p.10). The students involved in the Sunflower Movement not only used Facebook to coordinate demonstrations, but also to assist offline activities of the movement such as calling for supplies or assistance with event organization. The ease at which the Taiwanese student activists were able to quickly self-organized is because information spread across multiple groups on social media instead of being confined to the existing groups of student activists (Tsatsou, 2018).

These findings suggest that the important function of weak ties for collective action is *informational resources* such as raising awareness, information about future protest, exposure to persuasive messages or calls to action, or volunteer opportunities that are needed by individuals to successfully participate in civic and social causes (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Tang & Lee, 2013).

***Strong ties on social media: Trust & social influence***

Although current research has tended to focus on the importance of weak ties in participation, some scholars such as Choi and Shin (2016) have recognized and called for the need to investigate the impact of strong-tie bonds on collective action. This is because although weak ties provide useful information, those ties do not typically provide emotional support or closeness (Ellison et al., 2007). These scholars argued that unlike

weak-ties, “individuals who experience greater interpersonal trust feel connected to other people in their community” and are more likely to respond to calls for mobilization (Choi & Shin, 2016, p. 5; see also Kwak, Shah, & Holbert, 2004). Scholars such as Kwak, Shah, and Holbert (2004) found that socializing and building relationships with friends and neighbors can increase a sense of emotional attachment to people within the community, which can motivate individuals to participate in political activities on behalf of the group. Through identifying with a social movement group, individuals can foster a sense of emotional attachment to those involved in the group, which predicts actual and future intention to participate in collective action, particularly actions that require higher risk or cost such as protests (Saunders et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Forming emotional attachment with social movement group is therefore important to motivate individuals to engage in collective actions for the movement.

Others have noted that strong personal bonds with activists, civic leaders, or influential members in the social movement can connect cause supporters and prospective activists with an opportunity to protest (Lim, 2012, Passy & Monsch, 2014; Tremayne, 2014). Passy and Monsch (2014) argued that involvement in “dense relational context” with activists involved in the movement ensures that individuals remain in constant contact with contentious issues on a day-to-day basis, which could help sustain the commitment to the cause. Similarly, Nekmat, Gower, Gonzenback, and Flanagin (2015) found that the level of personal-ness was an important factor in influencing individual’s willingness to participate in collective action. In their experiment, they discovered that individuals were most willing to participate in both online and offline forms of collective action related to a fictious environmental group campaign when they

were invited by those closest to them in their personal social network (i.e., strong-tie) compared to invitation by their distant social network (i.e., weak-tie) and organizational sources (i.e., strangers). In other words, the stronger or closer the relationship with the invitation source, the higher the willingness to participate in collective action.

Although Nekmat et al. (2015) findings run contrary to Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela's (2011) study that found that weak-tie discussions were more predictive of participation than strong ties discussions, Nekmat et al. (2015)'s study supported findings from other research. These studies noted the role of strong ties for the mobilization of collective action through interview data, although these studies did not directly measure social ties. For instance, when Skoric and Poor (2013) interviewed activists and conducted a national survey of young adults in Singapore, they found that survey participants were more likely to respond to mobilizing messages to engage in protests if the message was sent from a friend. Furthermore, their interview data with activists revealed the importance of *trust* between friends on social media, which gave activists' messages more credibility among their friends. Several student protesters were friends of activists (i.e. shared personal bonds with activists) or friends of students who received invitations to participate in the protest (i.e., indirect personal bonds with activists). These student protesters stated that they participated in the cause to show support for their activist friends.

Similarly, Wood (2015) discovered in his study of the indigenous-led movement, Idle No More, that trust led users to perceive the information being shared by their Facebook friends as legitimate and credible. In turn, they were more likely to like or share that information with their own social network on Facebook, which further helped

spread awareness, symbols, tactics, and mobilizing messages. Trust, Wood (2015) found, also made it more likely for users to believe and identify with the activists being promoted to them by their Facebook friends, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will consider participating in collective action.

In in-depth interviews with anti-petrochemical plant protesters in China, Liu (2016) also found that mobilizing information received "immediate attention and action" from people if the information was from their digitally mediated social networks who they knew, trusted, and cared about the senders of the message (p. 613). When they received messages from someone they knew, they were "inspired to distribute the message widely" within their own social media networks and to "search for further information about PX" (p. 614). Therefore, strong ties with a cause supporter or activist in one's social media network can be particularly important for the mobilizing of collective action.

Consequently, findings from interview data suggests that the importance of strong ties in the mobilization process for high-cost activities such as protest participation appear to be because of *trust* in people who are part of their social connections. Using survey results from the Citizen Participation Study to investigate the differences between strong and weak ties on protest participation, Somma (2009) findings provide evidence that strong ties were more effective than weak or absent ties when it came to accepting invitations to participate in a protest. Somma (2009) argued that when it came to inviting people to participate in high-cost actions, higher "interpersonal trust" and emotional involvement from strong ties are likely to be "more consequential" compared to information shared through weak ties (p. 301). Several scholars who studied the civil

rights movement also noted that building trust overtime in Southern communities was important due to the high costs involved in being part of the civil rights movement in those communities (Carson, 1981; Payne, 1995). As McAdam and Paulsen (1993), and Payne (1995) documented, canvassing for voter registration or helping those to register to vote meant the loss of jobs, death threats, and sometimes even death itself. Many African Americans were afraid that if they participated in the movement and it failed, they would face retaliation and wrath from the white community (Tufekci, 2017). As such, trust in the capability of organizers and in other movement supporters was important to help individuals overcome the fear that the movement might fail.

Similarly, Arnold (2011) found that trust among activists within the battered women's movement was important to coordinate action in the face of risky types of collective action. Although Arnold (2011) did not examine social ties, his findings highlight the importance of trust to the success of a movement. Based on interviews and participant observation data over 16 years, Arnold (2011) discovered that forming social relationships centered on trust created strong emotions of solidarity among activists. This sense of unity allowed them to look beyond their self-interests and cooperate with one another to achieve shared political goals. His findings show that the quality (or strength) of social relationships among activists, based on the degree of trust, affected the success of the movement. This suggests that the more activists trust each other, the stronger their ties become, which in turn has a positive impact on a movement.

Indeed, trust is important to social movements. Although Krackhardt's (1992) study is not related to collective action but rather an organization that is undergoing crisis and change, his findings on the importance of strong ties during periods of major change

are particularly useful for the study of causes that challenge status quo and power structures. Krackhardt (1992) explained that people generally "resist change and are uncomfortable with uncertainty" (p. 218). Specifically, when it comes to "change that may threaten the status quo in terms of power and the standard routines of how decisions are made," it is not uncommon for people to feel uncertain about engaging in activities that may bring about that change because of fear of backlash or other reasons (Krackhardt, 1992, p. 238). Strong ties then "constitute a base of trust that can reduce resistance and provide comfort" (Krackhardt, 1992, p. 218). Simply put, trust in those who are involved in that change is important to overcome resistance in period of change. Based on Krachkhardt's (1992) findings concerning the importance of strong ties during periods of major change, it can be argued that strong ties are particularly important for social causes that challenge status quo power relationships and require the involvement of high-cost collective action.

These findings are particularly significant because they are in line with previous findings that show strong ties with other supporters of a cause to be a strong predictor of collective action, particularly for activities that involve higher risks or costs such as street protests or demonstrations (Bond et al., 2012; Passy & Monsch, 2004; Skoric & Poor, 2013; Somma, 2009; McAdams, 1999; McAdams & Paulsen, 1993; Nekmat et al., 2015; Tremayne, 2014; Valenzuela, 2014). The development of strong social ties can lead to feelings of obligation and expectations to help one another, including participating in collective action on behalf of the movement (Arnold, 2011). These findings suggest that the critical function of strong ties for collective action is one of "*social influence*" where the "stronger the tie, the stronger the influence" exerted on the individual (McAdam &

Paulsen, 1993, p. 655). Strong ties also deepen trust in social relationships, thereby increasing their likelihood or actual participation in collective action.

***Differing impact of social influence based on ties***

Based on extant research, it appears that weak and strong ties may have different roles to play in mobilizing participants for collective action, but few communication studies have examined social influence in the form of weak and strong ties on participation to test their impact. And the small number of studies that attempted to examine both strong and weak ties on participation in collective action are not without their limitations (see Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Valenzuela et al., 2014).

For instance, comparing the use of Twitter and Facebook and the likelihood of participating in street protests, Valenzuela, Arriagada and Scherman (2014) found that weak ties, such as those facilitated by Twitter, can be good for information diffusion at an early stage of the mobilization process. However, strong ties, such as those facilitated by Facebook, were better at encouraging protest participation among users. However, in their study, the strength of ties was assumed based on the social media site's friendship model rather than directly measured. In other words, social ties on Facebook were assumed to be strong based on the reasoning that Facebook allows users to connect to people they already know whereas Twitter allows users to connect with one another regardless of whether they know each other, thereby facilitating the formation of weak ties. In reality, most individuals have a mix of strong and weak ties on each social media site.

Although existing research within the communication field has not paid adequate attention to the role of social ties in mobilizing people for collective action, particularly

within a social media environment, previous research in voting behavior has found a differing impact of social ties. In a randomized controlled trial of political mobilization messages sent to 61 million Facebook users during the 2010 US congressional elections, Bond et al. (2012) found that friends whom users interacted with the most (which they classify as strong ties) were crucial for spreading both online and offline actions. However, the mobilizing impact of weak ties was limited to only online actions. Their experiment provides evidence that strong ties affected online political expression and online informative seeking behavior as well as offline voting behavior whereas weak ties affected only online political expression and information seeking behavior. Although Bond et al. (2012) experiment was specific to political expression and voting behavior, their study lends further evidence that strong ties are more effective than weak ties in mobilizing users for actions that require more effort such as voting turnout.

Social movement theorists have also documented the importance of social ties in protest mobilization, predating digital communication technologies. For scholars from the social movement literature such as Passy and Monsch (2014), the effects of social connections "varies greatly" based on the "costs involved" in the protest participation, where 'cost' is determined by whether the cause was controversial or mainstream[8] (p.

[8] Passy and Monsch (2014) distinguished social networks on two dimensions: in t erms of private networks (where friends and families are strong ties and acquaintances are weak ties) and organization networks (associations or memberships with cause organizations). However, strong and weak ties were examined only in terms of recruitment by means of personal bonds with activists while the rest of analysis that examined social interactions and social networks do not separate private from organization networks in which these networks and organizational networks were determined by ticking an exhaustive list of organizations to which they were already a part of. There is no indication if an overlap exists between organization networks and private networks in which friends, family members, or acquaintances may also be part of this organization networks.

42). In their study, they discovered that personal bond with an activist involved in the cause was a strong influence in motivating the individual to become an active member (as opposed to a sympathizer) for the cause, and even more so when the activist was a strong tie compared to weak tie. They also found that social connections were more important for mobilizing protesters for controversial causes more so than for mainstream causes.

Passy and Monsch's (2014) findings that strong ties with activists was more important for causes that may carry higher personal risks or costs is of interest to this dissertation. Their findings suggest that the importance of strong ties with activists is dependent on the level of personal risk or cost involved in the collective action. Their study supported previous findings by scholars of social movement. For instance, McAdam and Paulsen (1993) examined the role of social ties in participation in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. Participation in this project is considered high cost because it was time-consuming, physically demanding, and presented risks to the personal safety of activists involved in the project. Their results also indicated that strong ties to another volunteer involved in the project was the best predictor of participation. In fact, the "strength of social tie" accounted for "much of its power as a predictor of activism" (p. 655). These findings corroborate previous claims that strong ties with activists or volunteers is crucial, especially for participants of high-risk protests (McAdam, 1986).

Combining current findings from both communication and social movement literature, evidence suggests that weak and strong ties may have differing effects on participation, such that different levels of costs involved in participation may require different strengths of social ties for mobilization to occur. Although not fully examined in

the current communication literature, it is possible that for activities with low personal costs, weak ties may be more important because of informational diffusion that can help spread awareness and mobilizing messages quickly across social media. However, for activities that have high personal costs, strong ties may be more important for mobilization because of trust and social influence. Not all forms of participation in advancing the goals of a social movement require the same amount of effort or individual cost to the individual.

Consequently, research that considers both strength of social ties and their impact on different types of collective action may prove illuminating in parsing the effects of social ties on collective action within a social media environment, an area that has not been fully tested in present communication literature. As such, this study is interested in empirically testing the effects of tie strength on the likelihood of participation based on the types of costs involved in the collective action. In other words, this study hypothesized that tie strength will make a difference particularly for high-cost activities but should not make a difference for low-cost political activities:

**H1a**: Participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be more likely to engage in high-cost collective action compared to those who have weak ties.

**H1b:** Participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be just as likely as participants who have weak ties with cause supporters on social media to engage in low-cost collective action.

**Visibility of action**

Although social connections have always been important for mobilizing participants, as documented in the social movement literature, this dissertation seeks to add to communication research by testing the impact of social connections within a social media environment. Social media features that help users maintain and build social relationships share one thing in common - they make actions visible to user's connection on social media.[9] What were once semi-private actions, such as signing petitions, donating, volunteering, or protesting, can now be broadcasted widely to user's social connections on social media. Margetts et al. (2016) explained that social media allows individuals to know in real time what others are doing politically in ways that were not possible in the offline world.

Examining social media through the perspective of visibility of action, a key affordance of social media, can better illuminate the relationship between social movements and social media. Social media features that publicizes individualized political behavior impact decisions about whether and when to participate in collective action (Margetts et al., 2016). This is because by providing social information about the participatory behavior of others such as the number of friends and people interested in attending a protest or has signed an e-petition, social media can impact perceived costs and benefits of participating in a cause (Margetts et al., 2016). The same features that

[9] It is important to note that different social media sites have different features that allow certain actions but constraint others, which in turn shape actions, interactions, and political participation differently (Chan, 2016; Margetts et al., 2016; Wood, 2015). While different social media sites offer varying levels of visibility, what is common to many popular social media sites is its technological affordance in making actions – both offline and online – visible to those within one's social network.

provide social information about the political behavior of others also allow users to broadcast their actions to their social connections online. It is this public nature of action that impacts the relationship between social ties and participation in collective action, and on social media, such social information is abundant. Despite recent scholarly focus on Twitter or Facebook's role in collective action, particularly protest participation, few studies have considered visibility of action in influencing collective action, even though visibility is one of the key features of social media.

The studies that examined visibility of action found a positive impact on people's willingness to participate politically through expanding the scope for sharing ideas and motivating others to participate in collective action (Margetts et al., 2016). This is because the public nature of one's action on social media increases exposure to issues, shared grievances, and sanitize others to the idea of protest as a legitimate collective behavior. For instance, in an ethnographic study of high school students' participation in a walkout to show their support for Ferguson protesters, Clark (2016) found that several students were encouraged to participate when they knew that their friends were also going to do so and were in support of the walkout. This is because their friends' actions (e.g. comments, videos, and photos) were made visible to them on social media. By being motivated to participate in the walkout, these students' actions and shared perspectives became visible to other friends in their social circle who might not have considered the walkout to be an appropriate behavior. In fact, knowing who and the number of people within one's social network who are participating in the collective action reduces the costs of participation, especially if the number is high, because it shows the action as the "right thing to do."

This visibility is what led Tang and Lee (2013) to consider social media as contributing to the "phenomenon of accidental or unintentional" exposure to civic or political content as such content is often shared by one's connection on social media (p. 764). Even politically apathetic individuals who do not seek out political information on their own can still be exposed to political content related to the social movement so long as they have a friend or an acquaintance who shares such messages.[10] This is because the political information will be made visible to them (i.e., show up on their feed) by their social networks through acts of sharing, liking, or commenting (Lee, 2018). The ease with which political information is spread through social circles, due to social media features, can facilitate collective action by exposing the uninitiated or unaffiliated to cause concerns and issues.

In addition to exposure to political content, visibility of one's participation in collective action can expose and motivate others on social media to participate in the same action. Using a combination of big data and experiments, Margetts et al. (2016) found that visibility of participation and social information that provided indication of relative popularity of the cause (e.g. number of participants, amount donated) were powerful factors influencing decisions to participate in collective action. These scholars found that when potential participants were provided with information of the total

[10] Although incidental exposure to political information plays a role in political participation, Lee (2018) discovered that it may not be a sufficient condition for sustained action. Findings from Lee (2018)'s study of Facebook use during the 2016 candlelight vigils to protest a political scandal involving the South Korean president suggest that political information consumption increases the likelihood that individuals will take further political action when that information is intentionally sought.

number of people who participated[11] in political actions such as contacting representatives and signing petitions, they were more likely to participate in the action if that number was high. Their findings provide evidence that relative popularity of the action increases participation due to the perceived viability of the action achieving its goals. Since social media publicizes individualized political participation, this facilitates the spread of mobilization messages and generates the impulse to participate in collective action for popular causes. It is because of these features that make visible individual political behavior on social media that have led scholars such as Bennett and Segerberg (2013) to note the critical role of social media in facilitating participation in contemporary movements.

While current communication research has shown the importance of visibility of action on social media in helping spread mobilizing messages to others within and beyond one's social network (i.e. information diffusion), not enough is done to examine its impact on individual behavior. However, limited research in the field has suggested its importance in influencing behavior. In an online experimental study, Jeong and Lee (2013) found that social media sites were more effective in increasing participants' intention to join a cause than websites without a social media presence because of perceived visibility of action. Participants who perceived their action of joining a cause on Facebook to be visible to their friends and family on Facebook reported higher

[11] Margetts et al. (2016) looked mainly at social information in terms of the larger online public and not the impact of one's social ties. It is worth pointing out that the reasons for engaging in collective action may differ if one is provided with social information about their personal ties (where social pressure may be a more important motivator) versus general online users (where viability of the cause is a more important motivator).

intention to join the cause. Their findings suggest that the pressure to present a positive or desired image to people they know on social media can be a strong motivating factor to induce them to join causes on social media. Therefore, visibility is an important factor when individuals are deciding whether to participate in collective action.

***Combined impact of visibility of action and social ties: Social pressure***

Similarly, Haenschen (2016) found that social media can influence participation and turnout rates beyond traditional face-to-face methods due to the combined impact of visibility of action and social pressure. Through digital canvassing on Facebook, participants mobilized members of their social networks to vote by tagging them in Facebook status updates and sending them voting reminders. Although Haenschen's (2016) study focused specifically on voting behavior, her findings are relevant in illustrating the importance of social circles in influencing participation. This is because she demonstrated that "social norms can be induced and leveraged in online social networks," which can help explain the effectiveness of social media sites in the mobilization process (Haenschen, 2016, p. 543).

In other words, social pressure messages delivered by personal contacts were effective in increasing participation because they emphasized the social norm, which are rules of conduct that are socially enforced, of voting in one's community. More importantly, Haenschen's (2016) experiments showed that pressure from participants' social circle was more effective in increasing voter turnout than awareness of an election through media coverage. Haenschen's (2016) study built upon and supported previous research in voting behavior where social pressure from one's social circle was found to be influential in impacting political participation, specifically voter turnout (see Gerber,

Green, & Larimer, 2008, 2010). In an experiment by Gerber, Green and Larimer (2010), they found that making a person's behavior public or threatening to do so was one of the "most powerful forms of social pressure" (p. 410).

By promising to make the participant's voting records visible to his or her social connections such as friends, neighbors, and family, Gerber, Green, and Larimer (2010) discovered that social pressure led to an increase in voter turnout. This is because when people expect their political actions to be visible to the people they know such as their neighbors, they become more likely to abide by the social norms of their social circle or community (Gerber, Green, & Larimer, 2008). More importantly, Gerber et al. (2008) discovered that the "influence of social pressure is additive," where the more social pressure one is exposed to, the more likely the individual will vote, regardless of whether the individual was predisposed to vote in the first place (p. 40). Green and Gerber (2010) explained that making an action visible to one's social networks can either invoke feelings of shame or prestige seeking, thereby defining social pressure as playing upon a "basic human drive to win praise and avoid chastisement" (p. 331). Hence, people trying to advert shame for failing to vote will be motivated to comply to the social norm of voting. Similarly, people who seek the approval of others or praise for upholding social norms will be motivated to vote. Since social pressure increases the "amount of praise or scorn," it is believed to be "amplified" when a person's "compliance with social norms" is made visible to one's social connection (Green & Gerber, 2010, p. 331).

Although rarely examined in current communication literature on collective action, political science research on voting and advocacy behavior has suggested the importance of the combined impact of visibility of one's action and social ties on

individual's political participation. Findings from Haenschen (2016) and Jeong and Lee (2013) suggest that the influence of online social circles can have an impact on behavior because certain actions, especially those political in nature, emphasize social norms within the community. This is because people are often influenced by their social connections, what they think is expected of them, and how they think others will view them if they engage in a specific behavior (Margetts et al., 2016). When users know that their activities will be seen by others within their community, they may feel pressured to maintain or portray a positive image in the presence of their social network on social media, especially if their social circle supports the cause or activities related to the cause (Bereczkei, Birkas, & Kerekes, 2010; Cotterill, John, & Richardson, 2013; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Lacetera & Macis, 2010; Margetts et al., 2016). For instance, in a randomized controlled trial, Cotterill et al. (2013) discovered that participants who were asked to make a public pledge to donate books to school libraries and who were promised public recognition for doing so were more likely to do so compared to the control group. They also found that making a public pledge without the promise of publicity did not lead to an increase in book donations. Although the study examined charitable and not political behavior, the knowledge that one's actions may be made public or visible to a larger social network has a positive impact on behavior.

In other words, social norms can pressure people to conform to behavior or actions that are considered acceptable or appropriate within one's social networks. Findings from van Stekelenburg (2013) show that social norms play a key role in influencing participation. He found that individuals who belonged to social networks (e.g. classmates, friends, parents, peers) that supported protesting as a political activity

participated in the collective action whereas those who belonged to non-supportive social networks did not participate in the activity. This is because being in a social network that approve of or support collective action on behalf of the movement increases the likelihood of "being asked, influenced, and motivated" by those within their social network (van Stekelenburg, 2013, p. 230). In fact, the "degree of conformity hinges on the public nature of the norm," which can induce "emotions of pride or shame" (Haenschen, 2016, p, 545). Although some people might resist complying to social norms, many tend to conform with them to avoid social ostracism when they perceive others to be aware of their behavior (Gerber et al., 2008). In the context of collective action, people may feel ashamed or proud if they participate in collective action for a cause, depending on whether the social circle they belong to supports collective action for the cause.

As such, people learn about acceptable behavior through social norms within the group. Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990) described this aspect of social norm as an injunctive norm, which is the perception of what people who are important or close to them think one should do. Injunctive norms are socially enforced rules of conduct that inform people about actions or behaviors that are typically approved or disapproved within their social group (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In the context of collective action, individual's perception of what their strong-ties think their actions should be, and whether they should support the cause, will impact their decision to participate in types of collective action. Therefore, people are more likely to participate in collective action if they perceive support and encouragement by those who are in their close social network (McAdam, 1990; Morris 1981; van Stekelenburg, 2013).

Another aspect of social norm, which may also have an impact on respondents' participation in collective action is descriptive norms. Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren, (1990) explained that descriptive norm is the perception of what others within one's social network are doing. In other words, descriptive norms inform people about actions or behavior that are typically done within one's social network (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In the context of collective action, descriptive norms may play a role in participation since the cost of participating in collective action may decrease if more people they know are also in support of the cause or are participating in the same types of collective action. For instance, an individual may consider the cost of protesting to be low if many people they know participated in a protest or are in support of the cause.

One of the prominent ways that individuals learn about the norms of their online social circle is through online actions performed by others on social media. Online actions performed by individuals' social ties such as commenting, liking, and sharing are often publicized to the individual on social media, allowing her or him to get an idea of behaviors and causes that are supported by their social ties. For instance, liking a comment or sharing a post, with or without commentary, is often seen as publicly declaring one's support towards a cause or the behaviors associated with the cause (see Clark, 2016). The public nature of online actions on social media can impact participation in collective action because these actions signal to users the norms of their social group. These norms in turn can pressure individuals to perform offline actions that are perceived as socially desirable such as voting (Haenschen, 2016) or participating in a walkout (Clark, 2016) due to concerns over what others might think of them. The pressure to participate in collective action may be even more pronounced if the individual knows that

their participation will be publicized to their social ties (see Cialdini & Goldstein 2004; Gerber, et al., 2008, 2010; Haenschen, 2016).

Although visibility of action is an integral feature of social media sites, its effect on collective action remains largely under-examined in extant literature, where current studies have focused much of its attention on the impact of information diffusion, particularly for protest activities. Building on prior research that has shown the importance of emphasizing social norms on behavior, it is this perceived visibility of one's participation in collective action that this dissertation is interested in. It seeks to provide further empirical research on the impact of visibility of action on different costs of collective action within a social media environment. Particularly, this dissertation seeks to investigate whether the interaction between the public nature of one's offline collective action and social ties has an impact on types of collective action. Specifically,

**H2:** Strength of ties with cause supporters will have a greater positive effect on intention to participate in both high- and low-cost collective action if individuals think their think their actions will be visible to cause supporters.

## Chapter 3: Case Description on Facebook and Women's March Movements

This study will focus on the role of Facebook in organizing a social movement. Twitter and Facebook are both prominent social media channels and widely used by nonprofit and grassroots organizations, but the differences in technological affordances between the two social media sites give rise to different types of user interactions, content engagement (Haro-de-Rosario, sáez-martín, & del carmen caba pérez, 2018), and political participation. In their analysis of different types of social media and users' relations with local governments in Spain, Haro-de-Rosario et al. (2018) found that Facebook has higher levels of user engagement compared to Twitter.

Unlike Twitter, Facebook does not allow user anonymity and is focused on building and maintaining users' social relationships (Haro-de-Rosario et al, 2018). For instance, social connections are established and maintained through features such as liking, reacting to, sharing, and commenting. This makes Facebook a more suitable social media site for organizations seeking to build a relationship with their supporters compared to other types of social media channels. In fact, sharing is crucial on Facebook; the site constantly encourages users to share preferences, interests, comments, and status updates through its features (Smit, Heinrich, & Broersma, 2017). Facebook features provide spaces for likes/reactions, shares, facilitates user conversations, and publicize groups that users join to their social network, which in turn promotes information diffusion (Wood, 2015), especially to non-activists or those who are unaffiliated to the cause (Mercea, 2016). Through such features that aid information diffusion, Facebook can "fulfill the informational needs of users," an important element for strengthening weak ties and promoting collective action (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009, p. 882).

Despite being context-specific, some studies have shown that Facebook can be the main communication channel for retrieving information about protest events (see Mercea, 2016) and can contribute to participation in protests (Lee, 2018; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzula et al., 2014).

A useful tool that Facebook has is the Facebook Page feature, which helps users connect to specific advocacy organizations. Individuals who are strangers on Facebook are "networked together" based on shared interests in the social cause through Facebook pages (Conroy, Feezell, & Guerrero, 2012, p. 1538). These Facebook pages enable social movement organizers to build a "community-focused" network of social "critique, support, and solidarity" (Lokot, 2018, p. 805). For instance, a Facebook page such as the Womens March Minnesota allows users to find and forge new social ties with other supporters, activists, and organizers based on their common support for the women's movement. Over time, these ties may become weak or strong ties, which in turn can affect users' participation in collective action for the cause.

Facebook also aids in the spread of information beyond activists and organizers within the social movement network since its usage does not have to be linked to formal organizational membership (Mercea, 2016). This relative publicness of communication has led Mercea (2016) to argue that Facebook can be more effective than mass media, friends, or family members as a "mobilization channel" for collective action (p. 117). Indeed, users who "like" or "follow" Facebook pages who are not part of or involved in the organization can still receive mobilizing messages and be presented with opportunities to engage in collective action (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Zhang and Lee (2018) explained that "liking" a page reflects an intention to surveil the liked page."

Similarly, “following” a page enables the person to receive content updates from the page. Since many digitally enabled movements are decentralized and do not have a permanent place of business or meeting, Facebook pages have become one of the main communication and mobilizing channels for contemporary grassroots organizations.

More importantly, Facebook pages have the potential to engender strong ties, which are important for the mobilization of collective action by “building trusting relationships” among the group members through online interaction within the groups (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009, p. 882). By establishing contacts with cause supporters, activists or organizers, page members who have frequent social interactions with them in the Facebook page may be able to “activate themselves (politically) ahead of a protest” (Mercea, 2017, p. 117). The features in Facebook page facilitate social interactions such as commenting, liking, and sharing among supporters and with social movement organizers, which play an important role in helping group members learn about the social norms of the group. Since online interactions are visible to everyone in the Facebook page, members will invariably learn the norms of the page by reading Facebook page administrator’s posts and by watching other group members’ online interactions.

Several studies have shown that frequent social interactions such as discussions with supporters can also influence participation in collective action by allowing users to elaborate on problems relevant to the community (Conroy, et al., 2012, Gil de Zuniga et al, 2012). Conversations about politics and civil rights, where social media users share personal experiences, are powerful because these conversations reframe abstract policy or political narratives around their experiences. This interaction allows social media users to learn about other people’s struggles and opinions, and to add their own to the collective

(Lokot, 2018). In this sense, Facebook page features better support social interactions compared to other forms of social media such as Twitter. This is because while Twitter offers "spontaneous interaction and information sharing", it does not support the development of a "focal point" through which curated content around specific issues can garner support through likes and comments (Khazraee and Novak, 2018; p. 10).

Furthermore, these discussions or comments are publicly visible to all members of the Facebook page, which can expose page members to new arguments and further sensitize them to the future actions taken by the movement even if they do not participate in the discussion. Indeed, conversations about politics have been found to sensitize individuals to the goals of the movement, and their importance is even more evident when motivating individuals to get involved in collective action (Passy & Monsch, 2014). This is because discussions or conversations can help individuals develop a sense of moral indignation towards injustice and to view forms of collective action as legitimate. In fact, Passy and Monsch (2014) found that social interactions were more important in mobilizing individuals to participate in demanding protest actions concerning controversial causes compared to mainstream ones. This suggests that people may require more persuasion or motivation in the form of social interactions before participating in collective action involving causes that are politically divisive (e.g. abortion rights, police brutality, immigration laws).

Conversational interactions are also critical in encouraging individuals to increase commitment to the cause and to become active members rather than merely sympathizers (Passy & Monsch, 2014). In other words, conversational interactions among users can foster feelings of community by helping build trusting relationships, thereby creating

opportunities for collective action (Gil de Zuniga et al, 2012). Social media as fertile grounds for building communities among users have been documented by Yardi and Boyd (2010) who found that continued interactions and discussions with like-minded individuals can foster solidarity toward common goals. Even interactions and discussions with different-minded individuals reinforced in-group identity (Yardi & Boyd, 2010). Therefore, Facebook pages is a conducive environment for fostering and maintaining in-group identity and solidarity.

Social media play a critical role in the process of making political engagement routine by offering digital spaces that make it easy for individuals to interact with one another (Lokot, 2018). Social media features such as Facebook's status updates, "react/like" function, ability to tag friends, and the comment section encourage this engagement. Lokot (2018) explained that routinizing political conversations are especially important for environments where "traditional power structures" cannot be trusted to include citizen voices in the decision-making process (p. 807). It therefore comes as little surprise that organizers of social movements seeking to challenge status quos or authority figures such as the Women's March gravitate towards Facebook as a mobilizing and communication channel. Within the spaces of the Women's March Facebook page, progressive women's ideas, opinions, and experiences are supported, respected, and are considered in the decision-making process.

**Women's March Movement**

While there have been a few high-profile protests that started the momentum for digitally enabled social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Occupy Wall Street,

the Women's March on Washington is the largest single-day protest to date (Fisher, Dow, & Ray, 2017). More than 2 million people participated in the march in more than 400 cities in the United States on January 21, 2017 to protest policy positions and the personal conduct of the newly elected President Donald Trump (Moss & Maddrell, 2017). During Trump's presidential campaign, his policy stances and rhetoric created widespread opposition, with many individuals across the political spectrum accusing his campaign of as supporting and normalizing "misogyny, racism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination" (Weber et al., 2018, p. 2290).

The organic nature of organizing the march began a day after the 2016 election when a retired attorney from Hawaii, Teresa Shook, created a Facebook page to promote the idea of a women's march in Washington D.C to protest the results of the election (Nicolini & Hansen, 2018). The call-to-action Facebook post resonated with women across the country and quickly "transitioned into a broader, intersectional coalition of seasoned activists" who represented and advocated for different communities and progressive causes (Fisher et al., 2017, p. 1). Spreading virally, the Facebook page generated more than 10,000 RSVPs to the march by people from all over the country within a short period of time (Tolentino, 2017). According to Fisher et al. (2017), more than 400 organizational partners were involved in the Women's March on Washington by the day of the event, and the top three issues that motivated attendance were women's rights, equality, and reproductive rights.

Since its inception, the Women's March had "intended to appeal to participants across social categories of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and legal status," particularly those who felt threatened or marginalized by Trump's policy positions and

messages during his campaign (Fisher et al., 2017, 1). Unlike Black Lives Matter or Occupy Wall Street, the Women's March on Washington did not define itself as a movement dedicated to a single cause (Nicolini & Hansen, 2018). Instead, the Women's March initiatives covered a wide range of progressive causes, and the movement's inclusivity and unity principles likely contributed to success in mobilizing a huge crowd of protesters with diverse concerns on the day of Washington, D.C. march (Fisher et al., 2017; Nicolini & Hansen, 2018; Weber et al., 2018).

In a study of protest signs held by participants at the march Weber, Dejmanee, and Rhode (2018) found that messages reflected the movement's unity principles. For instance, signs and banners supporting the rights and concerns of multiple groups such as immigrants, women, racial minorities, people with disability, LGBTQ, environmentalists, and minimum wage workers were widespread. The number of protest signs proclaiming support for various social causes demonstrate that Women's March organizers and participants were motivated by issues that are intersectional in nature rather than being limited to concerns involving women. The Women's March on Washington, originally described as a "counterprogramming to the Inauguration (of President Donald Trump)" has since developed into a "formidable" social movement that seeks to increase representation of women in politics and positions of authority, and typically advocates for policies and laws that improve the lives of women in the United States (Butler-Sweet, 2017, para 1).

The success of the Women's March should be seen within the context of recent grass-roots led movements in the United States. Social media has enabled personalized forms of political engagement and expression and allowed them to spread virally, which

has facilitated conscious raising in groups that have traditionally been marginalized in society. Recent grassroots movements such as Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, People's Climate March, and the Women's March are examples of movements that were facilitated by social media. For instance, the Occupy Wall Street Twitter streams were found to be both a local and national "stitching mechanism" that connected different network layers, which facilitated the circulation of information, resources, and mobilizing message across various networks into a large-scale movement (Bennett et al., 2014, p. 247). In other words, Twitter provides a "bridging networking mechanism" that facilitated "information networks," which then aid collective action in a protest movement (Veenstra et al., 2014, p. 67).

In addition, Ince, Rojas, and Davis (2017) argued that the decentralized nature of social media encouraged its users to create their own content and broadcast ideas, thereby allowing them to participate politically in personal ways. In their study of Black Lives Matter social media presence on Twitter, Ince and colleagues (2017) found that supporters participated in the movement by expressing approval, support, and showing solidarity through their tweets. Facilitated by social media, sharing forms of personalized engagement with one's social connections have been shown to amass support for an alternative vision of society that can mobilize movement supporters towards collective action, especially those who are newcomers to political action (see Clark, 2016).

If Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matters were the results of social-economic consciousness and racial awakening respectively, then the Women's March was the result of feminist awakening that is "connected to the dissemination and expression of feminist ideas" through social media (Weber et al., 2018, p. 2293). Indeed,

in their analysis of protest signs during the march, Weber et al. (2018) found themes that reflected a feminist awakening that combined politics, activism, and popular culture. For instance, messages that depicted women as strong change agents were commonplace. Many women re-appropriated the offensive word *pussy*, a term used to sexualize and objectify women during Trump's presidential campaign, and reimagined it as a declaration of empowerment. In fact, the pink "pussy hats" that were worn by many protesters during the march in D.C. was the "unofficial visual brand of the movement" (Weber et al., 2018, p. 2300).

The ease at which individuals can participate in personalized politics, aided by social media, has also led to the general trend of reclaiming other derogatory terms used to refer to women such as "nasty women," a label given to Hillary Clinton by Trump during the third presidential debate. Women have since reclaimed the "nasty women" label across social media and popular culture through hashtags and memes, subverting the original intention to degrade women into a term that expresses female strength, courage, and solidarity (Frost, 2016; Kelly, 2016). Since the march in D.C., there have been several high-profile digital activism events such as #Shepersisted and #Metoo seeking to either reclaim stigmatizing labels or to give voice to traumatic events that were often silenced, indicative of a feminist conscious raising facilitated by social media.

In addition to conscious raising, these digitally enabled movements utilized social media such as Twitter and Facebook primarily in their communications and mobilization efforts to organize large-scale street protests. Typically, the short time span between the idea for a protest or march and the actual event itself requires quick dissemination to a broad range of audiences, something that social media is also effective at doing (Nicolini

& Hansen, 2018). The Women's March also shared multiple characteristics with Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter, in addition to leveraging social media networks to gain exposure and increase protest participation. The Women's March organizers are volunteers and the organization and their chapters do not have an official office space or physical location to hold meetings. The organizers are savvy users of social and digital media since it is often the first place where ideas for the movement are initiated. Due to the decentralized nature of these organizations, their local chapters – known as "sister marches" - have a lot of autonomy to decide strategies, directions, types of political action, and build coalitions based on local interests.

**Women's March Minnesota Facebook Page**

While the national Women's March on Washington movement attracted slightly less than half a million participants in D.C. (Wallace & Parlapiano, 2017), it is the so-called sister marches held locally that have the ability to reach people in a more personal and intimate way. The sister marches were a "local expression of political mobilization" that signal to congressional leaders that they should be pay attention to the concerns of their constituents (Butler-Sweet, 2017, para 11). Butler-Sweet (2017) aptly explained the importance of sister marches where large numbers of participants "marching on the Capital are just that, masses" but large groups of participants "marching in your district are voters whose concerns have material consequences to the legislators that represent them" (para 9).

This means that the issues and concerns that the sister marches or local chapters support are locally-relevant and directly affect supporters living in the state. In this sense,

the lives of local supporters are intertwined because of their shared geography where Minnesota state laws and policies affect their lives. The national organizers of the Women's March movement acknowledged the power of local chapters to affect political outcomes. In a statement given to the press not long after the march in Washington D.C., the spokesperson for the sister marches explained that in order to sustain the movement, it was imperative to give women at the grassroots level a sense of personal agency by providing them with the tools and opportunities to lead, organize, and mobilize local supporters for the movement (Przybyla, 2017).

Initially created to connect with likeminded activists and organize a sister march for individuals who did not have the resources or desire to participate in the march in Washington D.C., organizers of the sister march, Women's March Minnesota (WMMN), have continued to dedicate their time and efforts to addressing local political issue, and organizing collective action at the local level. Leading up to the sister march in Saint Paul, the Facebook page was a key site for educating, mobilizing and organizing the march to the state capitol, and for providing logistical information about the march. Following the unity principles of the national Women's March movement, the chapter supports a wide range of progressive causes. As of 2018, the Minnesota chapter outlined a plan to "elect women into office, end violence, work towards environmental justice" and to protect rights for multiple communities such as women, LGBTQ, workers, African Americans, people with disabilities, and immigrants (Belcamino, 2018, para 4). As Weber and colleagues (2018) explained, the ease at which connections are formed on social media facilitates coalition building with other progressive organizations, and the

mutually beneficial partnerships have enabled the chapter to advocate for a wide number of progressive causes.

Similar to how most digitally enabled movements started over the past decade, the lead organizers for Minnesota's sister march met on Facebook and did not previously know each other. Along with other volunteers, most of whom did not previously know each other, they met at a public library to discuss the march to the state capitol in St Paul (Bradley, 2017). The Minnesota march eventually drew more than hundred thousand participants (Bradley, 2017). As a movement that was organized on social media, the WMMN chapter's continual use of Facebook page as one of their main communication channels to engage with supporters, communicate directly with the public, and disseminate information about opportunities for political activities makes the chapter an ideal case study to answer my research questions and hypotheses about social ties, visibility, and their combined impact on different types of collective action.

In terms of popularity and impact, the national Women's March organization has more Facebook users who liked its page compared to local chapter. The national group had 802,561 Facebook users like its Facebook page, while only 18,228 people[12] liked the WMMN page. The national organization also sets the agenda for nation-wide initiatives that local chapters promote and modify for their state. For instance, the collective 2018 Women's March agenda is titled, #PowerToThe Polls, which aims to increase voter registration and to mobilize swing states to advocate for candidates and policies that

[12] The number of users who 'liked' the Women's March national Facebook page and Women's March Minnesota Facebook page was based on information gathered on their respective Facebook page on June 7, 2018.

reflect the movement's values and unity principles. While the chapters follow the national Women's March agenda, they have the liberty to organize a local version of #PowerToThe Polls voter registration drives, marches, legislative actions, community events, and coalitions based on the needs and interests of their local supporters ("Women's March Anniversary: Power to the Polls," n.d.).

Despite not having a large number of Facebook followers and supporters compared to the national Women's March, the WMMN chapter is a more appropriate case study for several reasons. This study seeks to understand the impact of social connections on Facebook can have on intention to participate in collective action. Because of its active use of Facebook in building ongoing relationships among supporters, the WMMN offers a better opportunity to examine social ties, social media, and social movements than the National Women's March. This is because national organizers will likely find it difficult to connect and engender ongoing social connections in the same way that local chapters can, simply because of proximity and relevance of issues to local supporters. Even if the national organizers were successful at engendering a sense of community and social bonds with Facebook page supporters, the supporters' geographical location might limit their opportunity to participate in collective action.

Because of this, national Women's March organizers have focused on issues that have implications on a federal level, leaving grassroots mobilization and coordinating to local chapters. To protest the U.S. border policy of separating the children of undocumented immigrants from their parents, the national Women's March promoted the #FamiliesBelongTogether day of action on its Facebook page with a link to sign an online petition to end family separation. However, street protests and demonstrations

were left to local chapters to organize, and the national Women's March only provided a link to "find an action near you" (Women's March, 2018). This meant that depending on the resources and interests of local chapters, supporters may or may not be able to participate in protests or demonstrations in their place of residence. In fact, with the exception of the national march that occurred in January 2017, collective action for the movement typically occurs on a local level rather than on a national level, due to practical limitations involving funding and organizational resources needed to coordinate collective action on a large-scale.

Additionally, local chapters are more effective at influencing state politics than the national Women's March, because local chapters engage in voter registration drive and mobilize voters to voice their opposition or support for specific bills, policies, and office holders. The chapter monitors the actions of state representatives through the WatchYourRepsMN effort, which provides bill and legislation monitoring, and frequently have calls-to-actions to mobilize the chapter's Facebook page supporters. For instance, during the last few days of the 2018 legislature session, the WMMN chapter kept the pressure on state representatives and Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton with a number of Facebook page posts calling for supporters to demand that he veto specific bills, including the so-called "guilty by association" measure, which would have increased penalties for political protesters who are arrested for disturbing the peace or damaging infrastructure (Women's March Minnesota, 2018a), and a bill opposing a mass transit initiative (Women's March Minnesota, 2018b). The governor ended up vetoing both of them.

The chapter also informed their supporters when state representatives uphold values supported by the movement. For example, the WMMN chapter wrote a Facebook post applauding and tagging Dayton for pledging to fight White House efforts to restrict federal funding for family planning providers that perform or refer patients for abortions (Women's March Minnesota, 2018c) as well as for his vetoes of the bills opposed by WMMN (Women's March Minnesota, 2018d). Furthermore, the chapter routinely posted messages encouraging Facebook supporters to vote in midterm elections and primaries, providing resources to help supporters get involved in "Get Out The Vote" efforts (Women's March Minnesota, 2018e), and often promoting events aimed at getting progressive candidates from Minnesota, particularly women, elected at the federal and state level (Women's March Minnesota, 2018f). Hence, grassroots organizing on a state level, a task relegated to local Women's March chapters, are particularly important for getting progressive candidates elected into office and for pressuring local representatives to veto or support specific bills.

The WMMN chapter also partners with many local advocacy groups and engages in a range of collective action. Staying true to its unity principle, the chapter's existing approach to intersectionality supports coalition building both within and outside the feminist movement. For instance, the chapter participated in the Twin Cities Wear Orange 2018, a march to the state capitol in Saint Paul organized by a coalition of groups supporting stricter gun control (Women's March Minnesota, 2018g). The chapter also called for supporters to participate in a vigil and emergency protest to demand justice for Thurman Blevins, an African American man who was fatally shot by police officers in Minneapolis's fourth precinct (Women's March Minnesota, 2018h). WMMN supported

efforts by the NAACP's Minneapolis chapter to demand accountability and transparency from police in the Blevins shooting (Women's March Minnesota, 2018i).

This philosophical approach has important implications on the types of political actions the WMMN chapter engages in. Allied organizations within the same movement may share general goals but gravitate toward different forms of collective action (McAdam, 1982). During the civil rights movement, for example, church-based groups challenged discrimination in the use of public accommodations through the tactic of a bus boycott. In 1953, news of the success of Baton Rogue's bus boycott led by Reverend Theodore Judson Jemison "disseminated through the black ministerial networks across the country," and became a role model for protest led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Montogmery boycott in 1955 and 1956 (Morris, 1984, p. 25). In the early 1960s, African American student groups and their supporters chose more confrontational tactics such as sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and "freedom rides" on integrated buses through southern states that had outlawed mixed-raced seating on buses. Like the church-based groups, the student groups were connected by an integrated communication network and therefore shared tactics to raise awareness for their causes.

Unlike movements that are focused on a specific set of issues (e.g. immigrant rights, economic inequality, LGBTQ rights, police brutality), the Women's March movement's focus is intersectional and diverse. Local chapters are not limited to political tactics or actions that had previously worked within the feminist movement. Furthermore, the local chapters are not constrained by the Women's March communication networks. Since the WMMN chapter has the autonomy to partner with other progressive organizations outside the movement, the chapter has engaged in a spectrum of political

action ranging from boycotts, strike, calling representatives, signing petitions, to rallying and demonstrating. Therefore, this makes the WMMN chapter a suitable case to examine the impact of social connections on different types of collective action.

Chapter 4: Interviews with WMMN Organizers

**Preparation & Questions**

The question of whether social media can assist grassroots organizers in mobilizing supporters for collective action is at the heart of the study. It is therefore important to get a sense of how social movement organizers think of the role of social media in building social ties and mobilizing its supporters online. Social movements bring together organizations and groups with a shared purpose of "addressing structural inequalities or affecting change to uphold the rights of individuals and communities" (Obregon & Tufte, 2017, p. 636). Therefore, it is important to know the reasons for using Facebook, and how they perceive the role of Facebook page in advancing the goals of the movement.

To do that, I interviewed the organizers of the WMMN chapter. I focused specifically on the organizers' use of Facebook as their primary communication and mobilization channels. Although the WMMN chapter comprises organizers who were responsible for different roles within the movement, I interviewed only those who were involved in managing the chapter's communication strategies and Facebook page. Interview participant recruitment involved several steps. I first reached out to an event marshal whom I met at the Women's March in Saint Paul as a participant.

I was part of a group of supporters who wrote the Women's March Manifesto for the Minnesota chapter and was invited to carry the banner at the march. Due to my initial (and only) involvement at the march, I met the marshal in person. She served as my first point of contact and introduced me to the chapter's communications team. I then reached out to the organizers in charge of decision making within the communications team. The

final interview participant was an organizer who was responsible for posting content about collective action from partners, coalitions, and WMMN, and she was recommended to me by the board chair. In total, I interviewed four organizers who at the time of the interview had duties that included the chapter's digital communication strategy, managing the chapter's Facebook page, writing and making decisions about the type of content to post, as well as deciding on the events and political actions to promote on the Facebook page.

To prepare and finalize the interview questions, I examined the Women's March Minnesota Facebook page to get an overview of the different practices the organizers employed to engage their Facebook page supporters. I did so to get an idea of the chapter's general use of Facebook page as a communication channel, the types of causes the organizers support, and more specifically, the different types of collective action that they promoted and engaged in. Knowledge of the organization's communication practices helped me structure my interview questions and informed survey questions related to collective action. For instance, survey participants were asked about their intention to participate in future collective action. The list of collective action options that survey participants chose from were drawn from existing political activities and events that the organization had previously participated or promoted.

Since each interview participant had a different role within the communications team, the order and phrasing of the main questions were altered based on the responsibilities of the participant on the team. Although all the interview participants were asked a similar set of main questions, which allowed me to compare their responses to get a more complete understanding of the WMMN's roles, goals, and communication

strategies, I tailored the follow-up questions based on their responses. I also had a list of prompts related to their unique roles within the communications team that I used to guide my follow-up questions. In other words, the follow-up questions and prompts were unique to each interview participant. This organic approach to the interview made it more conversational, allowing me to probe deeper into their social media actions, rationales, and practices, as well as allow them to provide unique experiences and perspectives based on their role. Acknowledging the different benefits of structured and unstructured interviews (see Tracy, 2013), I used a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. Combining both styles of interviews allowed me to elicit detailed responses about communication practices and routines to compare responses across different organizers, and obtain personal perspectives, emotional reactions, and more complex viewpoints.

In-depth interview questions were related to how the organizers plan their social media strategy. For instance, how do they decide what information or content is published on Facebook, what are the strategies that organizers use to engage and interact with their Facebook group members, do organizers attempt to build ties with their FB group members, and if they do, what are the Facebook practices that they use to build social ties (e.g. commenting, liking, sharing posts)? Following suggestions by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), I asked a mix of nondirective and directive questions. Nondirective questions can be classified as grand-tour, mini-tour, example and experience questions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). For instance, I asked grand-tour questions designed to understand how an activity or decision is made from start to finish such as “please describe the process of how types of political action that WMMN promote are decided

and prioritized." I also asked questions that drew on their experiences managing the Facebook page such as "were there examples of any downsides, if any, to using Facebook page to mobilize supporters."

Wanting to investigate how the participants conceptualized the effectiveness of Facebook page in mobilizing supporters for collective action, I asked, "when do you consider a call-to-action campaign or effort promoted on the Facebook page to be effective?" I also asked directive questions to understand how participants organize their thoughts such as "how have these past incidents changed your approach towards Facebook communication strategy?" This allowed the participant to define and elaborate on their approach and communication strategy. To account for changes in the role of Facebook as a key mobilizing channel as the movement evolved, I asked compare and contrast questions such as "since the start of the WMMN chapter, has your view of the importance of Facebook page as the chapter's main communication channel changed?"

Two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and two were conducted using video conferencing because the participants did not live in the Twin Cities. Although the two interviews were done remotely, it was a synchronous conversation where I still received visual cues such as facial expression, and in that regard, the interview was similar to an in-person interview. All four interviews lasted more an hour, with the shortest interview lasting 70 minutes and the longest being 85 minutes. After looking over my notes following the interview, I asked one of my participants a few follow-up questions via email for clarification.

The interviews were then transcribed, focusing on the content of the interview rather than how the content was delivered. I excluded from the transcription stutters,

pauses, fillers (e.g “um” or “er”), and other forms of interruption that could distract from understanding the transcript. This transcription approach seeks to produce an intelligible transcript conducive for analysis and comprehension, while still capturing the voice and intended meaning of the participant. The transcription amounted to 114 pages of data.

The data was manually coded and analyzed using an iterative approach, which alternates between an emergent reading of the interview data and the use of current literature and theory. An iterative analysis is a “reflexive process” where the data is revisited multiple times, and insights and codes are continuously being refined using the constant comparative method (Tracy, 2013, p. 184). The data went through multiple first-level and second-level coding in a systematic manner until a codebook was developed. In the first-level coding cycle, which required minimal interpretation, I focused on what was present in the data. The goal of first-level coding is to detail the ‘who, what, and where’ of the data (Tracy, 2013). I used color codes to accommodate data that fit more than one code.

By the third cycle of coding, I transformed general codes into ones that were more specific. Using the constant comparative method to compare data and its associated codes, I modified the code definition to include or exclude new data. As connections among the codes started to emerge, I refined them and sorted them into coherent themes. This stage is known as second-level coding, which involved interpretation (Tracy, 2013). Listing key codes, definitions, and examples, I grouped similar codes into broad themes/categories that were conceptually related to existing literature and theory, thereby forming the analysis of the interview data.

## Qualitative Findings

Due to their roles managing the chapter's Facebook page, the following organizers were interviewed – Alicia Donahue, Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors; Jammi Blair, an elected Board Chair; Mandy C.[13], responsible for all the calls to action; and Kelly Erickson, the Communication Lead. Following Tracy (2013), I went through several first-level and second-level coding cycle using a constant comparative process until themes from the interview data began to emerge. The codes that emerged in the first-level focused on describing the content and required little interpretation. These codes that were classified into several main categories related to the reason for using Facebook, its role in organizing collective action, sharing information, fostering connections, and growing the movement's base of supporters. The first-level codes also identified the limitations of using social media in contemporary grassroots movements (see Appendix A).

### *Facebook as a key communication channel*

One of the main categories that emerged from the interview data was the importance of Facebook to the movement. The organizers said that Facebook was chosen as the movement's primary communication channel due to their personal level of comfort and familiarity with the channel. For instance, Kelly explained that one of the founders of the chapter was a "social media activist" who "focuses a lot of her personal time" on Facebook (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). Alicia also

[13] Name has been changed to protect the identify of the call-to-action organizer.

explained her preference for Facebook over other social media sites (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018):

> Because my strongest social media platform is Facebook… If somebody else had been in charge of social media and was really a Twitter person, then I think maybe there would have been a stronger presence there. But Facebook is really where I live, and so it was a good fit (as a main communication channel).

Due to the organizers comfort with the channel, Facebook became a key communication channel for the chapter.

The WMMN chapter was formed by women who did not know each other and found each other on Facebook. Alicia said that "it started as comments on a thread in a (Facebook) group, and then I think we private messaged each other" to lay the foundations for what would later become the WMMN chapter (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Alicia further explained that Facebook provided the opportunity to interact with women from outside their social circles, bringing together volunteers who they would not have known otherwise, even if they had lived physically close to one another. Hence, one of the key strengths of Facebook is in "communicating and linking people up," making initial contact with like-minded strangers "much easier" (M. C., personal communication, February 6, 2018). Since then, many women who became organizers and volunteers joined the chapter through Facebook. Due to its history, Facebook remained a central communication channel for the chapter.

Another reason included features exclusive to Facebook such as Facebook Events, which facilitated organizing many users efficiently. Alicia explained the benefits of using Facebook compared to other social media sites for organizing collective action (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018):

> People go on Twitter to find out what's happening but there's no events calendar on Twitter. I mean, you have to scroll through all of the things to find anything, whereas with Facebook you can go to the event section on our page and look at hundreds of events that we have going on. So, that's really why we use Facebook is because of the event page.

The chapter uses the Facebook Events calendar frequently because it allowed them to quickly spread information about an event, see the number of people who are interested in the event, see the people "who's actually going to show up," and then send them direct messages to remind them of the event (J. Blair, personal communication. February 11, 2018).

The perception that most of their supporters were engaged on Facebook was another driving force for using Facebook as a key communication channel. Alicia explained that the chapter relies on the Facebook page "pretty regularly to educate and to do calls to action" simply because their supporters are engaged on Facebook (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Supporters were not the only ones who used Facebook often. According to Mandy, who has relationships with like-minded advocacy organizations in Minnesota, grassroots organizations main form of communication is on Facebook (M. C., personal communication, February 6, 2018):

> I mean no one's picking up the phone and talking to each other. In terms of grassroots, in terms of communicating with other organizations, it all happens through this (on Facebook).

The instantaneous nature of publishing and receiving information on Facebook is another reason the chapter prioritizes social media over communication channels. For instance, a lot of calls to action require immediate attention and response. Mandy explained that due to the urgency of many actions, Facebook allows her to reach many supporters without having to wait to include the actions in a newsletter or on the

chapter's website, thereby helping her get the message out quickly. The organizers have also used this affordance of Facebook to their advantage to help supporters who are "spread out" all over the state feel like they are part of the political activity even if they were unable to participate in person (J. Blair, personal communication, February 11, 2018). For instance, Mandy said she shares photos on Facebook of supporters participating in various forms of collective action and has received positive responses from the supporters. According to her, she thinks supporters have "a certain scope of interest" in the action even if they are unable to attend the activity themselves (M. C., personal communication, February 6, 2018).

***Evolving role of Facebook in the movement***

Another theme that emerged from the interview data was the evolving role of Facebook in the movement. Interview subjects described the current role of WMMN on Facebook is that of an organizer, providing multiple collective action opportunities for a wide range of social issues. All the organizers interviewed in this study acknowledged that Facebook was a great channel for spreading information and organizing (e.g. direct call-to-actions). They said that Facebook's speed offered opportunities to raise awareness concerning future collective action opportunities, explaining that Facebook often served as the first point of contact for supporters to receive information about events, policy updates, or news.

Despite being a conducive channel for organizing and spreading information, the organizers said they would like to use Facebook more as a channel to educate their supporters and create politically empowered individuals. According to Mandy, one of the ways organizers have been educating supporters is by providing updates in the U.S.

Congress such as information about who their elected officials are, what bills they have voted on, and ways to know what their elected officials are doing through a service called WatchYourRepMN. In addition, organizers educate supporters on the importance of voting, attempt to deepen their understanding of the U.S. political system (e.g. difference between state House and state Senate, and the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate), and expose them to different forms of collective action.

The organizers said the focus on education was part the chapter's 2018 goals in encouraging supporters to "show up," a term commonly used among them to mean participating in specific collective action. According to Jammi, supporters have a spectrum of comfort levels when participating in collective action. Some supporters were not comfortable engaging in civil disobedience such as blocking traffic; they preferred less confrontational actions that involved signing petitions and calling or writing postcards to their elected representatives. Others were willing to be marshals at events and participate in protests for controversial issues. Although an individual's comfort level with specific collective action varied, Kelly noted that supporters tended to be driven by issues rather than the proposed collection action. She felt that even though the Women's March represented a "wide breadth of topics" that focus on "equal rights for all humans," the chapter's base tended to be more interested in issues that affected them directly (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018).

In other words, it is not the specific type of political action that influences participation but rather the specific issue or cause. The organizers said many WMMN supporters expressed disappointment at not having a local march to commemorate the first-year anniversary of the Women's March. But a march in support of the specific issue

of immigrant rights that coincided with the Women's March anniversary had lackluster attendance. According to Kelly:

> It's interesting going back to the marching issue. Even with our anniversary event, there was a march, and it was for immigrant rights the Saturday before our Sunday (ticketed) event. We were like, "if you guys want to march, come to this march." No one did. There were (only) 500 people there.

Hence, organizers have shifted their focus towards educating their supporters and helping them understand the importance of "showing up" regularly for other types of collective action and not just on the anniversary of the Women's March as well as for other political issues and not just those that impact women rights.

For instance, elections occurring in 2018 are particularly important to the chapter because of the number of senate and congressional seats that will be contested in Minnesota. Therefore, organizers said they have been educating supporters on the importance of showing up to vote. Organizers also emphasized the importance of educating their supporters on the intersectionality of issues that the Women's March movement represented. Due to the Women's March unity principle, Alicia said they needed to help supporters "understand how all those issues (concerning minorities) are connected," particularly because not everyone knew how issues that affect them directly also intersected with others (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). To Alicia, educating supporters to understand that "when it comes to rights for individuals, it's not a pie…it's not like if LGBTQIA rights gets this much of the pie, then rights for individuals with disabilities only gets this much" was important to achieving the goals of the movement (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018).

***Building social ties with supporters on Facebook***

In addition to educating supporters, organizers said they also hoped to use Facebook to build community by fostering social connections, which was another key theme that was prevalent in the interview data. When reflecting on the main role of Facebook, all the organizers noted the importance of increasing engagement with supporters to build a relationship with them. In fact, the organizers expressed a desire to use Facebook mainly for engagement, prioritizing the role of Facebook as a relationship and community builder, rather than an organizing or informational channel. Jammi explained that supporters who were engaged in collective action for the movement were "connected to the people in the movement" and not because they were connected to "an idea" or "a Facebook page" (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Therefore, she believed that "building the net relationship" with supporters will "keep people coming back" to assist with the goals of the chapter (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018).

Relying on Facebook features, organizers described a variety of ways of connecting supporters to the chapter and to each other. These included online interactions with their supporters such as "liking" and commenting publicly to supporters' concerns, questions, or desire to connect. The practice of replying to all private messages via Facebook Messenger promptly and responding to any questions was a practice that organizers employed to build and maintain social connections with their supporters. Alicia expressed the chapter's sentiment directly, explaining that "engaging with people" and "acknowledging that they are taking time to engage with us" is important to her and the chapter's social media team (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018).

The organizers said the synchronous communication or feedback through likes or shares between the chapter and supporters enabled by Facebook features provided a sense of closeness. Since Facebook is "so immediate," and "so personal," the interaction between organizers and supporters felt like a conversation between friends (M. C., personal communication, February 6, 2018). As such, the organizers said they try to reciprocate supporters' efforts to connect with them on Facebook. Alicia also believed such online interactions kept supporters "staying engaged and staying connected," allowing the organization to deepen social ties with their supporters (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018).

To engage supporters and help them feel part of the women's march community, organizers said they posted inspiring stories of empowered women who had fought against misogyny. Aptly called "shero," these stories served as an "inspirational rallying point" for supporters to read about "an awesome woman doing something great" (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). Organizers also said that they aided the development of community bonds by providing supporters with a range of collective action opportunities and encouraging them to become more politically active (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). When engaging with supporters about political activism, organizers said they were careful to be respectful of their perspectives and opinions. According to Jammi, even if they disagreed with some supporters' opinions, they did not shut down conversations or argued with them. Rather, the organizers allowed supporters to express themselves and let the discussions evolve naturally (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018).

Organizers said they also tried to strengthen the emotional bond of the connection between the chapter and its Facebook followers by building trust. The organizers explained that one of their practices to foster trust was through accuracy of content. They fact checked all posts and only shared Facebook posts from other advocacy organizations with whom the chapter had a close relationship. Alicia explained that having a "constant stream of truthful, vetted information is really important" to them (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Therefore, when the organizers promoted an organization that they were not familiar with, they said they were careful to ensure that the content was "reliable," not "fake news." They said they tried to be "as transparent as possible" when reposting information (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018).

WMMN organizers said the effort to demonstrate reliability and being trustworthy went beyond fact-checking all posts. One of those practices included only promoting collective action opportunities from partner organizations that they trust. Unlike advocacy organizations that focus on a single-issue, the Women's March movement supports a range of progressive social causes. The group often promoted events organized by their allies to keep its supporters politically engaged, since not every supporter is passionate about the same social cause. By amplifying messages and actions of like-minded groups such as Indivisible Minnesota Local and Action Together Twin Cities, organizers said they believed they were increasing trust with their supporters (M. C., personal communications, February 6, 2018). This is also exemplified by Jammi's comment:

> And that we're not sending them off to some group that we've never heard of before to do an action or participate in something that might be unsafe or from a base of people that we don't know, or something that we don't trust (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018).

### *Growing the movement online*

The organizers have also been growing the movement by creating and promoting events and collective action opportunities that were meaningful and relatable to their supporters. One way they have achieved this, organizers said, was engage in issues that were personally relevant to the lives of Minnesotans such as policies or bills that would directly impact them. By partnering with numerous other progressive organizations, the organizers were able to connect supporters to collective action opportunities based on their interests and passion, thereby allowing the chapter to remain relevant among supporters. Forming coalitions with other organizations enabled the chapter to address and be involved in a wide range of social issues even if they do not have much expertise in those issues.

According to Mandy, these partnerships have allowed the chapter to achieve collective goals more efficiently because the chapter can take advantage of the resources and expertise of other movements (M. C., personal communications, February 6, 2018):

> Women's March, we work on lots of different fronts. We don't necessarily have a huge expertise in all those fronts. So, this coalition is a way of bringing in, of working in an area that we don't necessarily have so much expertise (in), but this other movement have it… If we all work together, you suddenly cover so much more area.

Furthermore, the communication strategy of amplifying the work of like-minded organizations by promoting their events has the added benefit of fostering good

relationships with members of those groups, allowing the chapter to reach “lots of communities we can’t reach” (M. C., personal communications, February 6, 2018). Some of those members would naturally be persuaded to “like,” follow, or share the posts from WMMN, thus enlarging the chapter’s reach online.

By leveraging partner organizations’ social networks on Facebook, the chapter was able to gain new supporters and increase engagement with its content. The rationale behind this practice is encapsulated by Kelly (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018):

> I think it's just really continuing to connect with those other organizations, to keep growing the community base, because you could be interested in something with Planned Parenthood and not really know what Women's March is doing, and then realize, "Oh, they're also doing this here and … here." All of a sudden, you're part of our group too.

The ability to grow the chapter’s membership quickly online was aided by Facebook features. Alicia shared that when a non-supporter interacts with the chapter’s posts on Facebook, the organizers will send them an invitation to “like” or “follow” the chapter’s Facebook page. As Alicia explained, Facebook identifies non-supporters who have “liked” the chapter’s posts and provides an option for the organizers to invite the non-supporters to join the chapter. These practices have allowed the chapter to grow the movement in Minnesota.

***Limitations***

Another key theme from the interview data was related to the limitations of using Facebook in the movement, particularly for fostering social ties. According to the organizers, Facebook’s large membership and sophisticated features (e.g. Events, like/react, comments, shares) enabled the chapter to mobilize, inform, and organize

collective action quickly and efficiently. But they also cited examples where the social media's instantaneous feedback and ease of use backfired to damage the reputation of the chapter.

One issue concerned the intensity of negative comments at times. For example, several commenters expressed their anger on the WMMN Facebook page when the group elected not to organize a local march on the anniversary of the first Women's March. Jammi explained that some of the people who wrote angry comments on the chapter's Facebook page engaged with the chapter infrequently online or "only popped in to find out where the march was," and had "missed five or six weeks of messages" informing supporters that they were having a ticketed event rather than a march (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Another example was when the WMMN leaders released an official statement condemning the actions of Al Franken when the former senator was accused of sexual harassment. Given the Al Franken is a popular U.S. senator among Democrats and liberals, many supporters (wrongly) thought that the organizers were pressuring Al Franken to resign and expressed their displeasure vocally on Facebook (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018).

At other times, the intense negativity came from non-supporters actively working to ridicule and disrupt the group's efforts. Since anyone can voice their opinions on a public Facebook page, the organizers expressed frustration at their lack of ability to control the conversation online. During these instances, they said Facebook's primary features can sometimes undermine their effort to control the chapter's image and promote a sense of community. Jammi shared an example when the chapter posted an infographic on dispelling rape culture and the post went viral. Although the infographic generated

awareness, the organizers received backlash from non-supporters. Jammi explained that they "spent an extraordinary amount of time hiding horrible comments from all over the world (and not the target audience they were trying to reach)." These disparaging remarks about women and sexual assault survivors were showing up in supporters news feed (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). According to Jammi, it was one of the downsides of using Facebook. Speaking more about the infographic example, Jammi said (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018):

> We had to let it go, it just had a life of its own. But that's one of the things that happens, is you lose control at some point. It's not Minnesotans, it's not people that we were hoping to reach. It was like Germany, and France, and all over the world. These (horrific) comments were coming in from everywhere.

Another limitation of Facebook that organizers spoke about was its algorithm. Organizers said that Facebook's algorithm hindered the visibility of their content at times, thereby affecting the participation rate of their events. To Kelly, the fact that the organizers can "put out a message" but that "doesn't mean it's going to get eyeballs" is a key limitation of relying on Facebook as a main communication channel. She further explained (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 18, 2018):

> I think that's one of the biggest things, and that's in any social media situation, you do not control who your messages go to, and when it goes out to them. You can hit send, but it doesn't mean (they're) going to see it right away.

Facebook's algorithm has also made it difficult to measure the success of call-to-action efforts. Mandy explained that unlike knocking on doors or calling supporters, the chapter found it difficult to assess the direct impact that a Facebook post had on participation. Although the organizers tracked the number of "likes" and "shares" to gauge responses to

their posts and events, they have not yet found a reliable way to measure the actual visibility of their posts.

Consequently, some organizers have started questioning the central role of Facebook in the chapter's communication plans. Apart from the inconsistency of post visibility caused by Facebook's algorithm, all the organizers acknowledged that not all their supporters use Facebook. In addition, the ones that do may be overwhelmed by the constant flow of information and "zone out" instead of being engaged. Kelly provided an example from her personal experience, explaining what she thought is another limitation of relying on Facebook (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 18, 2018):

> When I saw it on Facebook, I just didn't pay attention, because it's so much more mindless, I think with Facebook... I feel like a lot of people take (Facebook) as a moment to just take a break from whatever else they're doing. They're zoning out.

Alicia and Mandy also expressed sentiments that "social media is so overwhelming" (M. C., personal communications, February 6, 2018) and "can be oppressive" (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018) due to the speed at which they receive information. Recognizing this limitation of social media, Alicia said that they are trying to diversify their communication channels to let supporters "actually digest what we're doing" (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018).

Acknowledging the limits of Facebook, organizers said they have diversified their communication channels to include emails and the chapter's official website. Since emails are subjected to algorithms, organizers perceived it to be a more reliable channel (compared to social media) to advertise volunteer positions and specific call-to-actions campaigns (e.g. GOTV campaigns) where there is a higher chance of supporters receiving the chapter's messages.

Moreover, some organizers have the perception that although having a Facebook presence is crucial in growing their supporter base, it may be an inferior channel in building community compared to face-to-face interaction, particularly because online communication fails to capture visual cues needed to establish stronger bonds. One of the organizers believed that merely agreeing with a Facebook post do not deepen relationships but having conversations in person will, and these personal interactions help foster social bonds.

Organizers said they could not entirely replace face-to-face interactions as a means of building attachment. To Jammi, these forms of online interaction were inferior to having an actual conversation or discussion in person because online 'likes' or comments do not help supporters get to know each other on a more personal level beyond superficial political interests or preferences (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Other organizers such as Kelly explained that through personal experiences, it was possible to develop "a wonderful relationship" with people online but meeting face-to-face can help create a connection that virtual settings cannot because of the lack of visual cues (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018).

Based on the interview data, organizers shared the reasons for using Facebook as the chapter's main communication channel, its evolving role within the organization, social media practices that organizers used to foster social ties, growing supporter base online, and limitations of the channel that have hindered their efforts. Implications from the findings are further discussed within the context of the current literature and survey results in the discussion chapter.

Chapter 5: Survey of WMMN FB Supporters

**Concepts & Measurements**

To measure the effects of social ties and visibility of action on participation intention on different political actions, I created an online survey and sent out a recruitment message to invite WMMN Facebook page supporters[14] to participate in the survey. The page supporters are people who have either liked or followed the chapter's page. The recruitment message contained a brief description of the study, where respondents were told that the purpose of the study was to better understand the political behavior of the WMMN Facebook page supporters, and a link to the survey. Respondents were informed about confidentiality, risks and benefits of being in the study, incentives, voluntary nature of the study, and had to agree to a statement of consent before starting the survey. They were also provided contact information in case they needed to contact me about the survey. Survey participants were compensated with a chance to win a $50 gift card, which was awarded to 15 participants.

Since only administrators have permission to post content on the page, I gave the recruitment message along with the survey link to the Facebook page administrators to post on the WMMN Facebook page. To increase visibility of the survey, the recruitment message was pinned to the top of the chapter's Facebook page, so that it was the first post supporters saw when they visited the page. To increase the reach of the survey recruitment message beyond supporters who visit the chapter's page regularly, the

[14] Although not all people who "like" or "follow" the chapter's Facebook page are supporters, almost all the respondents fit the profile of Women's March supporters who are heavily liberal (see Table 7).

administrators used a Facebook technique called boosting so that the recruitment message would appear higher on supporters' news feeds. Boosting the recruitment message also ensured that supporters saw the message regardless of when it was first shared by the Facebook page administrators. A total of 1020 people who liked or followed the WMMN Facebook page participated in the survey from March 4 to May 12. Although the WMMN Facebook page has slightly over 18,000 people who 'liked' the page, it is difficult to know the survey response rate without actual data from the Facebook corporation. This is because information about how many supporters saw the recruitment message on WMMN Facebook page or on their News Feed is not available to the chapter's Facebook administrators.

As elaborated in Chapter 2, the goal of this survey was to test the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be more likely to engage in high-cost collective action compared to those who have weak ties.

**H1b:** Participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be just as likely as participants who have weak ties with cause supporters on social media to engage in low-cost collective action.

**H2:** Strength of ties with cause supporters will have a greater positive effect on intention to participate in both high- and low-cost collective action if individuals think their think their actions will be visible to cause supporters.

## Dependent Variable(s)

### *Collective Action Activities*

Despite an increasing number of studies interested in contentious politics and contemporary movements, there is a lack of consistent and formal definition of participation. According to Son and Lin (2008), the lack of formal definition currently offered in the literature is due to some scholars emphasizing involvement while others emphasize actions taken by individuals or groups of people for collective benefits. Due to the absence of an agreed upon definition, some studies measure participation in terms of political and/or protest participation (Chan, 2016; Mcleod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Skoric & Poor, 2013; Tang & Lee, 2013), others measure it in terms of civic participation (Choi & Shin, 2016; Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004), yet others measure it in terms of both political and civic participation (Gil de Zuniga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009).

This study conceptualizes collective action as expressions of resistance against collective disadvantage. This definition is admittedly broad, and it is beyond the scope of this study to address all the different forms of collective action. However, Postmes and Brunsting (2002) provided a good overview. They explained that there are different dimensions along which collective action may vary. One is the distinction between individualistic forms of collective action such as those that can be undertaken solitarily (e.g. sabotage, letter writing) and collectivistic forms of action such as those that require the participation of many members of a group (e.g. marches, rallies, mass petition). It must be noted that the individualistic forms of action should still be conceived as

"collective in nature" when the purpose of the action is intended to achieve a "collective outcome" (Postmes & Brunsting, 2002, p. 291).

Another is the distinction between actions that are more persuasive and those that are more confrontational. Postmes and Brunsting (2002) distinguished between the different types of activities ranging from persuasive or soft activities (e.g. lobbying, petitioning) to confrontational or 'hard' activities (e.g. demonstrating, marching). This distinction between persuasive and confrontational activities is particularly of interest to this study. Although not directly mentioned in Postmes and Brunsting's (2002) dimensions of collective action, another way of thinking about collective action can be in terms of the different intensity of activities involved. In other words, the different intensity of activities denotes different levels of perceived personal costs involved.

As a result, for this study, I measured collective action in terms of low and high levels of personal costs involved in the collective action. Acknowledging that perceived costs have multiple dimensions such as time, finances, and effort required by the activity, or risks to personal safety, I did not have a pre-determined category of low- and high-cost political actions. On a 3-point scale, I asked survey participants to indicate the amount of personal cost they associated with doing the following activities that included signing petitions, calling representatives, donating, voting, event volunteering, marching/rallying, and boycotting, with 1 = "low cost," 2 = "moderate cost," and 3 = "high cost." Participants were told that cost is defined as their perceived amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost needed for each action. On a 7-point scale, I then asked participants about the likelihood of participating in each of the same list of actions in the next 12 months, with 1 = "extremely unlikely," 6 = "extremely likely" and 7 = "undecided."

Respondents who selected 'undecided' were recoded as missing data and excluded from the analysis (see Appendix B for the full question wordings for all the questions in the survey).

## Independent Variables

### *Social Ties Measurements*

Much like the operationalization of collective action, Krackhardt (1992) has argued that tie strength has been measured in multiple ways. Although the operationalization of tie strength has not been consistent, it is common for scholars to conceptualize tie strength in terms of assumed closeness of relationships based on familial structure. As strong ties are often considered to be more cohesive than weak ties, they are typically operationalized as those shared with family and friends whereas weak ties are those shared with colleagues and acquaintances (Gil de Zuniga & Valenzuela, 2011; Nekmat et al., 2015; Passy & Monsch, 2014). Others such as McAdam and Paulsen (1993) measured tie strength not in terms of assumed social cohesion or predetermined categories but based on respondents' choice. Respondents to a high-cost activity listed people who they considered important enough to receive updates of their activities and these people were coded as having strong ties with the respondents.[15]

Yet others, such as Granovetter (1973), have measured tie strength in terms of frequency and nature of interaction. Granovetter (1973) defined the strength of a tie as "a

[15] In their study of the effects of ties on recruitment into the Freedom Summer Project, McAdam and Paulsen (1993) noted that applicants of the Summer Project were asked to list individuals whom they wished to be kept updated about their summer activities. The researchers then coded strong ties as persons who were listed on the subject's application and weak ties were defined as persons who were not directly listed on the application but still linked to the applicants.

combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and reciprocal services that characterize the tie" (p. 1361). It is the combination of qualities such as interaction, affection, and time that Krackhardt (1992) argued is the reason *strong ties can engender trust*. Trust forms the basis of strong ties that is needed to overcome resistance and uncertainty, which led Krackhardt (1992) to caution against ignoring the "affect level" of strong ties (p. 237). Krackhardt (1992) explained that "interaction creates opportunity for the exchange of information," "affection creates motivation to treat others in positive ways, or at least not to do something that would hurt the person" and "time creates the experience necessary to allow each person to predict how the other will use any shared information" (p. 219). Therefore, the affective component of ties is important in understanding its role during times of social crisis or social change.

The emotional aspect of tie strength has been echoed by several scholars who cautioned against relying solely on relationship type or familial structure to determine tie strength (Gilbert, 2012; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Marsden & Campbell, 2012). In their study, Marsden and Campbell (2012) found that people's relationships, which is a commonly used predictor of tie strength, was only modestly associated with tie strength. The assumption that kindship relations are always strong, friendships are intermediate, and shared affiliation relationships are weak masked the variation in tie strength that exist within these relationship types. In an earlier study, Marsden and Campbell (1984) postulated that relationship types, classified as memberships, colleagues, neighbors, friendships, or kinships are "predictors of tie strength" rather than "actual indicators" (p. 488).

While their study found that the assumption that kinship-based ties are stronger than colleague-ties is accurate, the "combined ability of the predictors to account for strength" is limited (p. 499). This is because a common measurement of tie strength - frequency and duration of contact - bias the strength of tie based on relationship types (Marsden and Campbell, 1984). For instance, the use of frequency of contact as a measurement tends to overestimate tie strength between co-workers since they see each other frequently, and the use of duration of contact as a measurement overestimates tie strength between family members since they know each other longer compared to other types of relationship. Hence, those measurements may privilege certain relationship-types over others. Consequently, Marsden and Campbell (1984) asserted that direct measures such as emotional intensity or closeness are better measures of tie strength rather than relationship-types. To account for the limitations of basing tie strength on relationship-types and to include the affective-component of social ties, I measured tie strength on several dimensions that included interaction (also known as reciprocity), emotional intensity (also known as affect), and duration.

***Reciprocity***. While dimensions of tie strength are often measured in a non-virtual environment, in the context of social media, these dimensions are measured in the ways people interact with one another through the use of social media features. Hayes, Carr, and Wohn (2016) explained that instances of "likes" and "shares" of weak or strong ties' posts are seen as a sign of support and approval. Based on focus groups and interviews with social media users, Hayes, Carr, and Wohn (2016) found that social media users tend to view 'likes' as acceptance of their posts, and as a form of social support that they derived emotional gratification when someone 'likes' or reacts positively to their posts.

Sharing Facebook posts on the other hand shows judgement that the post is worth looking at. Zhang and Lee (2018) explained that the motivation for sharing posts could be to show support but it could also be to show disapproval and an invitation to criticize the content of the post. Commenting to a post or replying to someone else's comment is a direct attempt to communicate (Zhang & Lee, 2018). Hence, all features on Facebook such as liking, sharing, comment/replying, and reacting to a Facebook post are regarded as recognition of content and are considered forms of interaction with other supporters and administrators of the Facebook page. Using these features are indicators of recognition, validation, and acceptance, and the frequency of which Facebook page supporters receive these symbols of support from other supporters affect a sense of social connection within a social media environment.

Therefore, to measure reciprocity, survey respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of reciprocity (e.g. comment/reply, liked/reacted) with other Facebook page supporters' posts, replies, or comments. They were also asked how often they read posts made by other members of the Facebook page as well as their replies or comments. Respondents were also asked how often other Facebook page supporters interacted with (e.g. comment/reply, liked/reacted) their posts, replies, or comments. All three items were coded on a 7-point scale, with 1 = "Never" and 7 = "More than once a day" (see Table 1 for the full question wording).

***Affect***. To measure the level of affect respondents felt towards the organization, they were asked to indicate how close (e.g. affection, attachment, or bond) they felt towards other Facebook page supporters. This item was coded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = "Not at all close" to 5 = "Extremely close." Trust is an important component of

affect. Hence, respondents were also asked to indicate to what extent they trusted supporters of the Facebook page. This item was coded on a 5-point scale with 1 = "Never" and 5 = "Always" (see Table 1 for the full question wording).

***Duration.*** To measure the amount of time respondents engaged with the WMMN Facebook page, they were asked to indicate the amount of time they typically spend reading posts, comments, or private messages made by the administrators of the Facebook page. They were also asked to indicate the amount of time they typically spend interacting (e.g. like/react, comment/reply, share) with posts, comments or private messages made by the administrators of the Facebook page. Both items were coded on a 7-point scale with 1 = "No time at all" and 7 = "More than 30 minutes" (see Table 1 for the full question wording).

To examine the inter-correlations (i.e. correlation matrix) between all 7 items that measured tie strength, and to reduce the data into a smaller number of dimensions, I performed an exploratory factor analysis using Oblimin rotation. I chose an oblique rotation such as the Oblimin rotation on the rationale that dimensions of strength of ties are correlated with one another. Results from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant at a $p < 0.01$ level, indicating that the correlations were sufficiently large enough for conducting an exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .733, above the recommended threshold of .6 (see Kaiser, 1974). Since both assumptions were met, principal axis factoring was used to extract three factors that met Kaiser's eigenvalue greater than 1 criteria (Fabrigar, MacCallum, Wegener, & Strahan,1999).

These three factors explained about 71.15% of the cumulative variance. Items that loaded on the first dimension represented frequency of reciprocity, the second dimension represented duration of reciprocity, and the third dimension represented depth of emotions (see Table 1 for the full factor loading). These three dimensions of tie strength aligned with Granovetter (1973) and Krackhardt (1992) concept of tie strength wherein strength of tie is determined by extent of reciprocity, intensity of affection, and time.

Cronbach's Alpha for reciprocity is above .7 and therefore included in the measurement for tie strength. Although Cronbach's Alpha score for affection and time were below .7, their low scores were attributed to the lack of variability in results since there were only two question items for each dimension. Since affection and time as dimensions of tie strength were both conceptually supported, and it is not the goal of this research to create a scale for tie strength, both measurements of affection and time were included in the analysis despite their low alpha scores. As such, I created three tie strength indices (reciprocity, affect, and duration), by averaging the responses to the questions that comprised each of the three factors (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Summary statistics and factor analysis results for strength of tie

| | Mean | S.D. | Factor Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | (1) Reciprocity | (2) Time | (3) Affection |
| **Reciprocity (Cronbach's Alpha = .759)** | **4.38** | **1.27** | | | |
| How often do you **interact** with other FB page members' posts, replies, or comments? | 4.71 | 1.45 | .813 | -.017 | -.036 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often do other members **interact** with your posts, replies, or comments in the FB page? | 3.07 | 1.92 | .740 | -.013 | .048 |
| How often do you **read** posts, replies, or comments made by other members in the FB page? | 5.34 | 1.19 | .644 | .031 | .005 |
| **Duration (Cronbach's Alpha = .675)** | **2.25** | **0.92** | | | |
| How much time do you typically spend **reading** posts, comments, or private messages made by the WMMN FB page administrator? | 2.63 | 1.14 | .024 | .758 | -.053 |
| How much time do you typically spend **interacting** with posts, comments, or private messages made by the WMMN FB page administrator? | 2.01 | .955 | -.030 | .694 | .060 |
| **Affect (Cronbach's Alpha = .506)** | **3.06** | **.74** | | | |
| In general, how **close** (e.g. affection, attachment, bond) do you feel towards members of the WMMN FB page? | 2.54 | .926 | .132 | .057 | .562 |
| In general, how often can you **trust** members of the WMMN FB page? | 3.71 | .825 | -.049 | -.016 | .570 |

*Notes: Affection scale was on a 5-point Likert scale, whereas reciprocity and duration scales were both on a 7-point Likert scale.*

***Visibility of action: pressure to conform***

To measure whether the knowledge of their political actions becoming public influences participation intention in future collective action, respondents were asked to imagine that their acts of activism were visible to all supporters of the WMMN Facebook page. They were then asked if they will participate in a low-cost activity if their actions were made public to Facebook page supporters. They were also asked the likelihood of whether they will participate in the same low-cost activity if their actions were private from supporters of the Facebook page. To measure how visibility affected participation intention in high-cost activity, respondents were also asked whether they will participate in a high-cost activity if their actions were made public to supporters of the Facebook page. Similarly, they were asked the likelihood of whether they will participate in the same high-cost activity if their actions were private from supporters of the Facebook group. Lastly, respondents were asked the extent to which they think supporters of the Facebook page will see their actions if they were made public by WMMN organizers. These items were coded on a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = "Very Unlikely" to 7 = "Very Likely" (see Appendix B for full question wording).

## Control Variables

### *Perceived social norms*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, numerous studies have shown that social norms can affect behavior because people feel pressured to comply with certain behaviors that are considered acceptable or desirable within their social network due to a fear of disapproval. As such, respondents' perception of what people important to them might think about their participation in collective action would affect their behavioral

intention.[16] Therefore, respondents were asked how much they thought people important to them on Facebook (i.e. personal social networks) would approve or disapprove of their participation in both low-cost and high-cost activities. These items were coded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disapprove" to 7 = "Strongly Approve" (Cronbach's α = .862, M = 5.60, SD = 1.09). Respondents were also asked to indicate the perceived likelihood that their friends and family on Facebook would see their political actions (e.g. donating, volunteering, protesting, signing petitions, calling representatives) if those actions were shared on Facebook by WMMN organizers. A composite index was created by using the average of the two items (see Table 2 for descriptive summary).

**Table 2.** Summary statistics for injunctive norm

| Individual items and Scales | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| **Injunctive norm (Cronbach's Alpha = .862)** | **5.60** | **1.09** |
| How much do you think people important to you on FB (e.g. your social network) would approve or disapprove of your participation in **low-cost activities**? | 5.73 | 1.09 |
| How much do you think people important to you on FB (e.g. your social network) would approve or disapprove of your participation in **high-cost activities**? | 5.46 | 1.24 |

***Perceived Efficacy***

[16] Although scholars such as Mou and Lin (2015) have argued for the need to measure both injunctive norm and descriptive norm to get a complete measure of social norm, this research study did not include measurements for descriptive norm. Descriptive norm measures the perception of whether others (e.g. people in your peer group and people like you) are participating in a specific behavior. Since respondents are all Facebook supporters of WMMN chapter, descriptive norm was not measured, since most supporters would likely participate in one or more of the call-to-actions promoted or organized by WMMN chapter.

Political efficacy, the perception that political actions have an impact on the political process, has been shown to have an important role in the participation of collective actions. In a study examining the effects of individual's social media activity and protest participation, Hsiao (2019) found that political efficacy was a direct moderator of social media use and participation. Since street protests might lead to physical harm by law enforcers and potential loss of income when protesters are jailed, efficacy is an important factor in motivating protesters to engage in high-cost activities despite adverse conditions (Hsiao, 2018). In other words, protesters need to believe that they can make an impact, a vital belief needed to overcome barriers to participation in high-cost collective action. To measure individual's political efficacy, respondents were asked a list of questions that measured internal efficacy and external efficacy on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree."

Internal efficacy was measured with questions such as "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country," and "I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .668$, $M = 4.44$, $SD = .651$). External efficacy was measured with questions such as "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on," "Public officials don't care much what people like me think," and "People like me don't have any say about what the government does" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .577$, $M = 3.44$, $SD = .855$). Due to the low Cronbach alpha values not meeting the minimum recommended requirement of .7 (see Nunnally, 1978), political efficacy was not used in the analyses.

However, some scholars have argued that measures of political efficacy have tended to confound the effects of individual and group agency by measuring both in the same scale (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Velasquez and LaRose (2015) argued that the differences in motivations predicting individual and group participation suggest that more nuance in measurement is needed in distinguishing between individual and group level of agency. This sentiment is supported by research from scholars like Finkel and Muller (1998) who found that individual and group efficacy have independent effects on participation in protest activities. Other scholars however found that the two efficacy measures were moderately positively correlated where respondents who felt individually efficacious also felt more efficacious as a group (see Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008).

The conflicting findings could be the result of different dimensions of efficacy needed to motivate individuals to engage in different types of political actions. For instance, Kelly and Kelly (1994) discovered that in predicting participation in less demanding forms of collective action, individual efficacy was more important than group efficacy in motivating participation, particularly among individuals who had weak group identity. Hence, when individuals' level of identification with the group is low, it is likely that their individual sense of efficacy served as a motivator to participation more so than when the individual's group identity is strong (Kelly & Kelly, 1994). To assess respondents' individual efficacy, they were asked the extent to which they personally have an impact on political outcomes if the participated in a list of activities. The list of activities included a range of high- and low-cost actions. The items were coded on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree"

(Cronbach's α = .724, M = 4.12, SD = .48). A composite index was constructed taking the means of all the items related to related to individual efficacy (see Table 3 for full question wording).

Where individual efficacy measures the belief that the individual can make a difference in politics (Klandermans et al., 2008), group efficacy measures the extent to which supporters perceive the WMMN chapter and movement as capable of bringing about proposed change. It is the belief that group-related problems can be solved by collective efforts (Bandura, 1997) and is a belief held by individuals about the group (Lee, 2006). Van Stekelenburg (2013) explained that for change to be possible, supporters need to perceive the group as being able to "unite and fight" for issues as well as perceive the political environment as "receptive for the claims" made by the group (p. 226). Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements: "the actions of WMMN have a huge influence on public policies or public affairs," "the actions of WMMN can improve society," "the actions of WMMN make it easier to achieve desired political or policy outcome compared to individual actions," and "if enough people joined the Women's March movement and demanded change, politicians would take steps to end their problems." Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree" (Cronbach's α = .742, M = 4.22, SD = .53). A composite index was constructed taking the means of all the items related to related to group efficacy (see Table 3 for full question wording).

**Table 3.** Summary statistics for efficacy

| Individual items and Scales | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| **Individual Efficacy (Cronbach's Alpha = .724)** | **4.12** | **0.48** |
| How much do you agree or disagree that you can personally have an impact on political outcomes if you participated in the following activities? | | |
| Signing petition(s) | 3.53 | 1.01 |
| Calling/writing representative(s) | 4.25 | 0.727 |
| Donating (e.g. buying merchandise, etc) | 3.75 | 0.9 |
| Voting in election(s) | 4.85 | 0.415 |
| Event volunteering (e.g. marshal/sign making/ad hoc | 4.10 | 0.745 |
| tasks) | 4.26 | 0.689 |
| Marching/rallying/demonstration | 4.12 | 0.809 |
| Boycotting | | |
| **Group Efficacy (Cronbach's Alpha = .742)** | **4.22** | **0.53** |
| The actions of WMMN have a huge influence on public policies or public affairs | 3.79 | 0.785 |
| The actions of WMMN can improve society | 4.53 | 0.609 |
| The actions of WMMN make it easier to achieve desired political or policy outcome compared to individual actions | 4.35 | 0.678 |
| If enough people joined the WM movement and demanded change, politicians would take steps to end their problems. | 4.19 | 0.742 |

***Politicized identity***

Several studies have shown that identification with a politicized identity such as being an activist or groups that value political action such as feminist organizations is one of most significant predicators of participation in collective action (Duncan, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Nelson et al., 2008; Simon, Loewy, Stürmer, Weber, Freytag, Habig, Kampmeier, & Spahlinger, 1998; van Zomeren, Postmes, &

Spears, 2008; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). For instance, Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) found that the stronger someone identifies as being an activist, the higher the likelihood of future activism and participation in collective action. They argued that once an individual identifies as being an activist, that individual may continue to engage in future collective action to the degree that the actions are "seen as relevant to" her or his identity and values (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995, p. 44).

In support of previous findings on the importance of politicized identity for the participation of collective action, Mercea (2016) found that participants who were not members of activist organizations but were committed to collective action were able to sustain their level of activism through networked communication on social media sites. In other words, having a politicized identity can be more important for collective action than actual membership in social movement organizations, particularly for some causes. Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) explained that a politicized identity such as a feminist identity has an impact on how women interpret and understand grievances. For instance, the more a person identifies as a feminist, the more the person is likely to believe that women are deprived of resources compared to men. Hence, the stronger a person identifies as being a feminist, the more likely that person perceives inequality as systemic rather than an individual problem, and the higher the likelihood that they engage in political activism for women's rights (Iyer & Ryan, 2009; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Liss, Crawford, & Popp, 2004).

Similarly, in the Freedom Summer Project study by McAdam and Paulsen (1993), they found that while social ties were crucial for recruiting participants in high risk activism (see above), strong ties in and of themselves were not sufficient to encourage

participation in high risk activism. Rather, it was a combination of a "strong subjective identification" with an identity that supported the Freedom Summer Project such as the civil rights community (which is a politicized group), along with social ties that also supported involvement in the Freedom Summer Project, that were particularly effective in encouraging participation in high-risk forms of collective action (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993, p. 659). Findings from McAdam and Paulsen (1993) are particularly important because it implied that a political identification with supporters of the cause, along with knowing someone who supported involvement in the cause, are important to actual participation in high-cost collective action.

Using a scale from Alberici and Milesi (2013) that measured if respondents identify with other activists and if being an activist was important to them, politicized was measured by three items that were adapted for the Women's March movement. Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements: "I identify with other people who support gender-related causes," "I identify with the Women's March movement," and "Being involved in the Women's movement is important to me." The items were measured on a 7-point scale with 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 7 = "Strongly agree" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$, $M = 6.49$, $SD = .723$). A composite score was created by averaging all 3 items and using it in the analyses (see Table 4 for the full question wording).

**Table 4.** Summary statistics for politicized identity

| Individual items and Scales | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| **Politicized Identity (Cronbach's Alpha = .730)** | **6.49** | **.723** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I identify with other people who support gender-related causes | 6.61 | 6.25 |
| I identify with the Women's March movement | 6.46 | 0.748 |
| Being involved in the Women's movement is important to me | 6.38 | 0.786 |

***Prior involvement in political participation***

Previous research also found that individual's prior political participation influences respondents' intention to participate in actions related to the same cause (Bennett, 2003; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Postmes & Brunsting, 2002; Nekmat, Gower, Gonzenbach & Flanagin, 2015). In these studies, past participation in collective action was found to predict willingness to participate in future actions to support the cause. Despite newer forms of political participation, particularly those allowed by social media, the list of activities exclude online behavior to reduce the endogeneity of predicting political behavior from social media use (see Halpern et al., 2017). According to Van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears (2008), researchers of collective action have often relied on proxies for collective action rather than actual behavior (although recent studies of contentious politics have attempted to measure actual behavior). Despite the difficulties in quantifying collective action, Van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears (2008) argued against collapsing measures of intention, attitudes, and behavior into one scale, which can obscure the differences or similarities between these three different measures.

As a result, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they had participated in a range of political activities in the last 12 months such as attended a public hearing, town hall meeting, or city council meeting, participated in demonstrations, protests, rallies, or marches, or voted in political elections (see Table 5

for the full list of activities). The items were coded such as 1 = "yes" and 0 = "no." A composite index to measure respondents' extent of prior political involvement was created by taking the sum of all the political activities they were engaged in in the last 12 months and used in the analyses (see Table 5 for descriptive summary).

**Table 5.** Summary statistics for prior political participation

| Individual items and Scales | Mean or % |
|---|---|
| **Extent of Prior Political Involvement** | **6.03** |
| Attended a public hearing, town hall meeting, or city council meeting | 49% |
| Called or wrote a letter to an elected public representative | 82% |
| Posted a political sign, banner, button or bumper sticker | 72% |
| Participated in demonstrations, protests, rallies, or marches | 80% |
| Signed a petition about a political or social issue | 90% |
| Donated money to any organization concerned with a political or social issue | 79% |
| Participated in or volunteer for groups that took actions for social or political reform or issues | 63% |
| Voted in political election(s) | 89% |

***Need to Belong***

The need to belong is a fundamental human desire. Research has shown that people form social connections quickly under most situations and try to maintain stable relationships, avoiding the dissolution of existing connections when possible (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Malone, Pillow, & Osman, 2011). A channel with features that fosters and maintains social connections such as Facebook allows users to communicate with and learn about others, allowing them to fulfill basic belonging needs (Seidman, 2013).

Supporters' individual differences in the need to belong affects behavior because the higher the need to belong, the more likely people will be concerned with others' evaluation and acceptance of them. Individuals with a higher need to belong have more desire for social acceptance. Therefore, they will more likely comply to behaviors that are expected of them to maintain or obtain a good-standing within their social network (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013).

A common measure to assess the extent to which an individual desire to be accepted by others and to avoid being ostracized is the need to belong scale (Malone et al., 2011). Using a 7-point Likert scale developed by Leary, Kelly, Cottrell and Schreindorfer (2013), respondents were asked a list of 10 questions: "if other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me," "I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject," "it bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans," and "I seldom worry about whether other people care about me." Individual items were coded as 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 7 = "Strongly Agree" and exhibited high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .814$, $M = 3.94$, $SD = .87$). A composite score to measure the respondents' need to belong was created by taking the mean of all 10 items and used in the analyses (see Table 6 for the full list of items and descriptive statistics).

**Table 6.** Summary statistics for need to belong

| Individual items and Scales | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| **Need to Belong (Cronbach's Alpha = .814)** | **3.94** | **.87** |
| If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me | 3.25 | 1.45 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me | 3.27 | 1.46 |
| I seldom worry about whether other people care about me | 3.85 | 1.45 |
| I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need | 5.93 | .986 |
| I want other people to accept me | 5.01 | 1.11 |
| I do not like being alone | 3.44 | 1.66 |
| Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me | 3.78 | 1.65 |
| I have a strong need to belong | 3.83 | 1.45 |
| It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans | 3.67 | 1.48 |
| My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me | 3.45 | 1.49 |

***Demographics***

Basic demographic information such as education and income have been known to affect political participation and involvement. For instance, studies have shown that individuals with higher income and educational background are more politically involved (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Schussman & Soule, 2005) and use digital media for political purposes (van Laer, 2010). Hence, respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education with 1 = "Less than high school diploma" and 5 = "Graduate degree", their household income for the past 12 months before taxes with 1 = "Under $5,000" and 29 = "More than $250,000." Since studies such as Schusmman and Soule (2005) have found that liberals are more likely to engage in certain political activities than non-liberals, respondents were also asked where they would place themselves on the political scale with 1 = "Extremely Conservative," 7 = "Extremely Liberal," and 8 = "Undecided." Respondents were also asked what geographical region best describes

where they currently live with 1 = “Twin Cities,” 2 = “Suburbs,” and 3 = “Greater Minnesota.” Other basic demographics were also collected such as age and ethnicity.

**Descriptive & Summary Statistics**

The Table below (see Table 7) displays the demographic characteristics of the sample. Survey respondents who participated in the survey promoted by the WMMN chapter on Facebook were mostly Caucasians (93%), middle-aged (46 years old), and lived in the metro area (47%). Survey respondents were also heavily liberal (97%), corroborating findings that women rights supporters tend to have liberal political views (Cowan, Mestlin, & Masek, 1992). An overwhelming majority of respondents have at least a Bachelor’s degree (80%), which is consistent with previous studies that found higher levels of education led to support for feminist causes (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Nelson et al., 2008). Respondents were mostly middle-class, earning an average household income between $75,000 and $79,999, consistent with results from Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) who found that middle-class women were over-represented in women rights movements.

**Table 7.** Sample demographics (N = 1020)

| Individual items and Scales | Mean or % (N) | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 46.37 | 14.38 |
| Income | 20.13 | 6.94 |
| Ethnicity: | | |
| White | 93% (691) | |
| Non-White | 7% (55) | |
| Geographical Region: | | |
| Twin Cities | 47% (350) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Suburbs | 34% (256) |
| Greater Minnesota | 19% (139) |
| Political Affiliation: | |
| Liberal | 97% (724) |
| Moderate | 2% (16) |
| Conservative | 1% (3) |
| Education | |
| Graduate degree | 43% (323) |
| Bachelor's degree | 37% (277) |
| Non-college degree | 20% (148) |

*Notes: All the demographic questions had missing data. Respondents who indicated "undecided" on the political affiliation question were recoded as missing data. Percentages are rounded up. Income represents household income before taxes; 1 = Under $5,000, 2 = $5,000- $9,999 … 20 = $75,000-$79,999, 21 = $80,000-$84,999.*

Most survey respondents were engaged on the WMMN Facebook page, with 47% of them consuming information, opinions, and ideas on wall posts and discussions, and 29% of them actively engaged with the chapter (or Facebook page administrators) through commenting and responding to wall posts. Majority of respondents spent over 10 minutes of their time on Facebook per day, with most of them spending at least 30 minutes to an hour on Facebook daily (see Table 8 for question wording and descriptive statistics).

**Table 8.** Summary statistics for participation in WMMN Facebook Page

| Individual items and Scales | Mean or % | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Intensity of WMMN Facebook Page Participation | **2.16** | **.796** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I rarely visit the WMMN FB page[17] | 20% | |
| I read wall posts/discussion | 47% | |
| I mostly read, sometimes write/reply/comment to wall posts | 29% | |
| I read, and write/reply/comment to wall posts | 4% | |
| I read, write, and start new posts/discussion to the page | <1% | |
| Duration of Facebook use per day | **4.09** | **1.243** |
| No time at all | <1% | |
| Less than 10 mins | 7% | |
| 10 to 30 mins | 27% | |
| More than 30 mins, up to 1 hour | 33% | |
| More than 1 hour, up to 2 hours | 20% | |
| More than 2 hours, up to 3 hours | 8% | |
| More than 3 hours | 5% | |

*Notes: Percentages were rounded up*

On average, survey respondents reported a moderate sense of affection with supporters (3.06 out of 5) as well as online reciprocity (4.38 out of 7). However, respondents only reported low mean scores (2.25 out of 7) for time spent on the WMMN Facebook page. On average, they did not spend too much time on the Facebook page, spending less than five minutes interacting with the chapter on Facebook. Overall, survey respondents had moderate mean scores for tie strength.

**Table 9.** Summary statistics for tie strength

| Individual items and Scales | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|

[17] It must be noted that although 20% of respondents rarely visited the WMMN Facebook page, these respondents may still receive wall post updates and discussions on their personal News Feed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Affection: Trust & sense of closeness | 3.05 | .737 |
| Reciprocity: Like/react; comment; share | 4.38 | 1.27 |
| Duration: Time spent on Facebook Page | 2.25 | .917 |

*Notes: Percentages were rounded up*

Most of the survey respondents were politically active and had been in the past 12 months. The least participated political activity was attending public hearings, town hall meetings, or city council meetings, followed by participating in or volunteering for social or political organizations. Of all the political activities, the most participated political activity, engaged by almost all survey participants in the past year, was signing a petition about a political or social issue, followed by voting in elections (see Table 10).

**Table 10.** Summary statistics for prior political participation

| Individual items and Scales | (%) |
|---|---|
| Attended public hearing | 50% |
| Called or wrote a letter to representatives | 82% |
| Posted a political sign, banner, or bumper sticker | 72% |
| Participated in protests, rallies, or marches | 80% |
| Signed a petition about a political or social issue | 90% |
| Donated money to a social or political org. | 79% |
| Volunteered for a social or political org. | 63% |
| Voted in political election(s) | 89% |

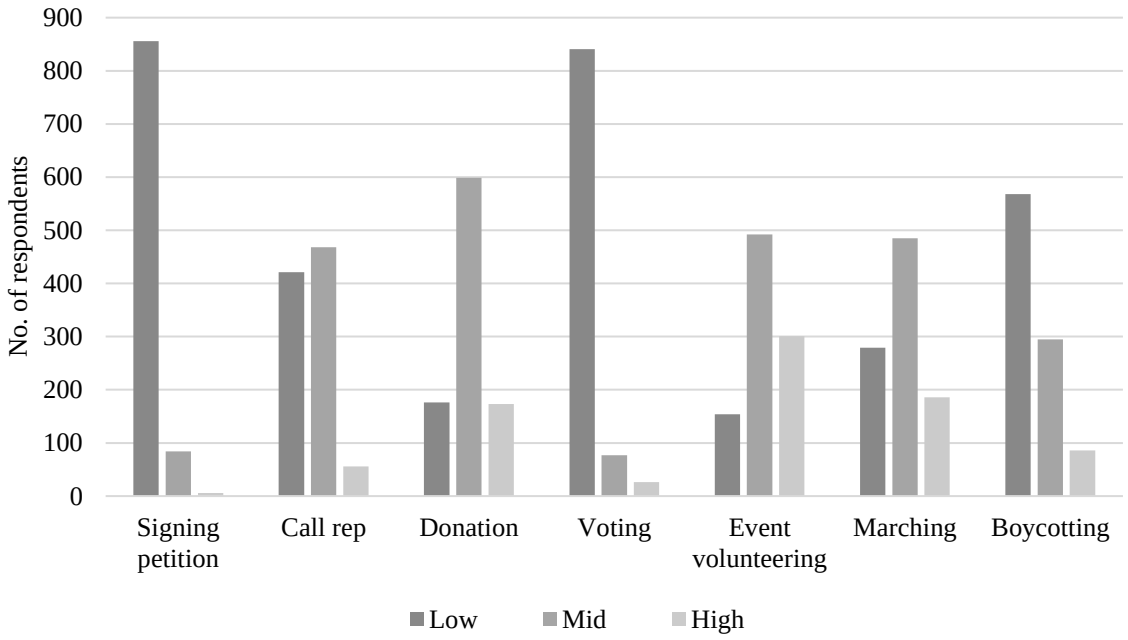
*Notes: Percentages were rounded up*

Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of political activities, the amount of perceived cost they associate with each activity (see Graph A). Signing a petition, voting, and boycotting were perceived by most respondents to be low-cost activities,

where cost was defined as perceived as the amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost involved in participating in the activity.

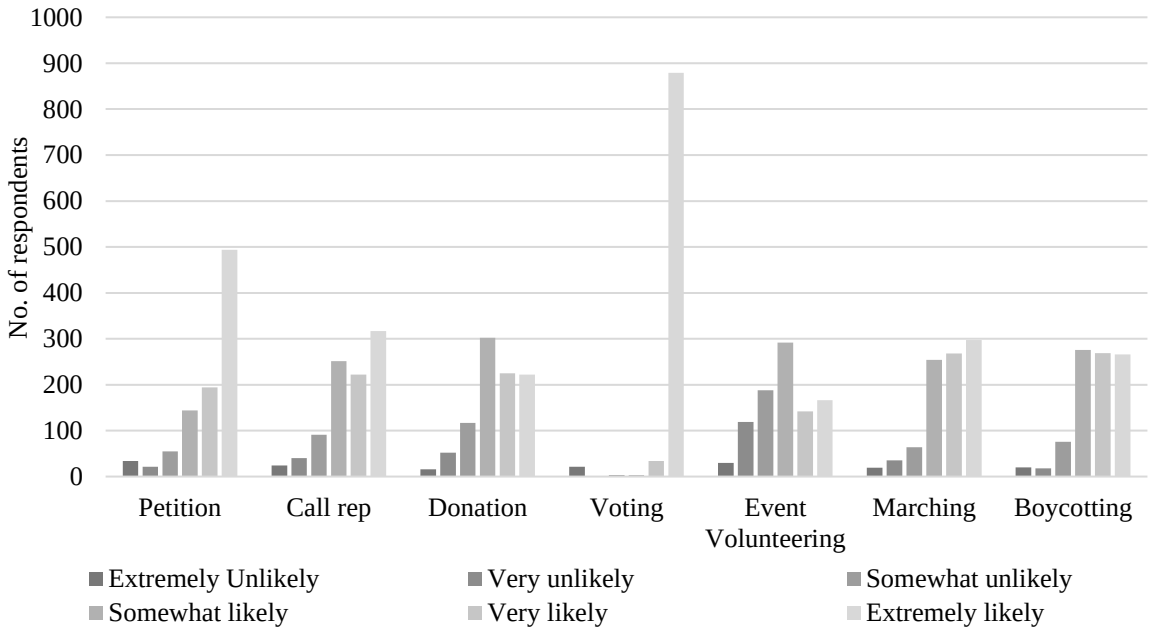
A larger proportion of respondents considered activities such as calling representatives, donation, event volunteering, marching, and boycotting as mid-cost, requiring only medium amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost, rather than high-cost. Interestingly, more respondents considered event volunteering (e.g. marshaling, sign making, fundraising, ad hoc tasks) and donation (e.g. buying merchandise) to be high-cost activities compared to marching/rallying/demonstrations, which is conventionally perceived to be a higher cost activity in the current literature compared to volunteering or donating money (e.g. working/giving behind the scenes).

**Graph A:** Perceived Cost of Actions



While most respondents were likely to participate in all the collective activities in the next 12 months, a large proportion of respondents indicated that they were extremely likely to vote and sign petitions. More respondents indicated their likelihood of participating in marching/rallying/demonstrations and boycotting compared to donating, calling representatives, and event volunteering. Of all the political activities, respondents were least likely to participate in event volunteering (see Graph B).

**Graph B:** Likelihood of Participation

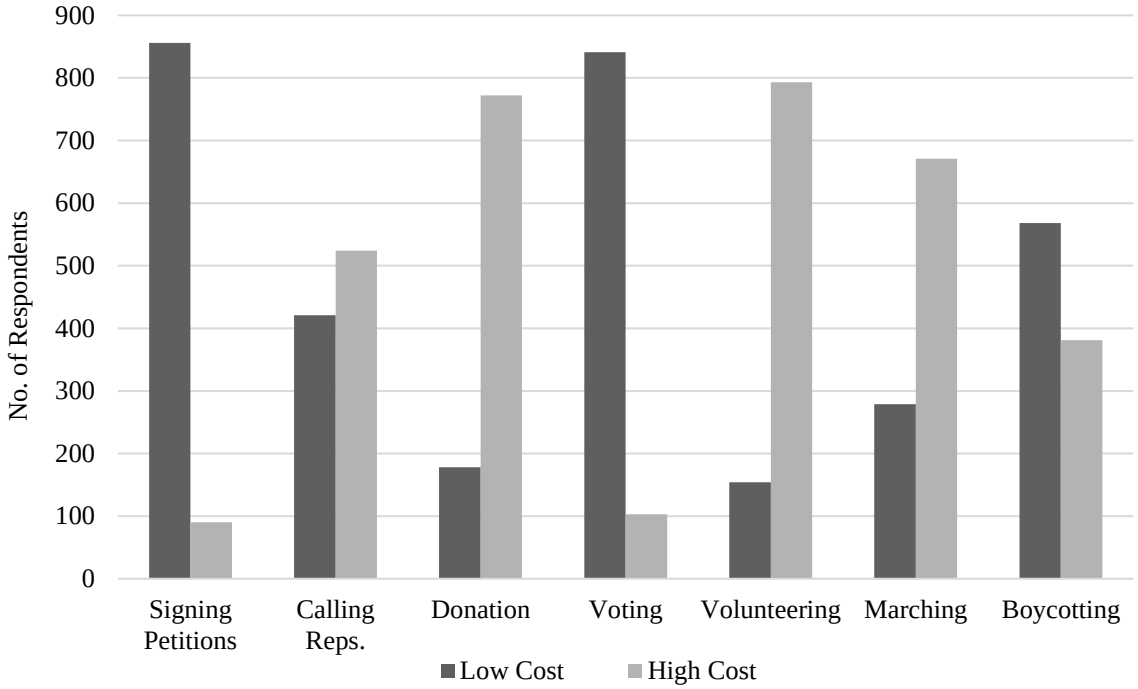



## Statistical Results

***Hypothesis 1.*** My first hypothesis (H1a) is that participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be more likely to engage in high-cost collective action compared to those who have weak ties. My second hypothesis (H1b) is

that participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media will be just as likely as participants who have weak ties with cause supporters on social media to engage in low-cost collective action. To test these hypotheses, I performed an OLS regression analysis. To prepare the data for analysis, I recategorized the different perceived costs of collective action. Since most respondents considered the list of collective activities such as calling representatives, event volunteering, and marching to be mid-cost rather than high-cost (see Graph A), I combined the two categories into one and relabeled it simply as a high-cost action (see Graph C). Three political activities - signing petitions, voting, and boycotting, were overwhelmingly perceived as low-cost actions. Donating, event volunteering, marching, and calling representatives were perceived as high-cost actions.

**Graph C:** Perceived High- & Low-Cost Political Actions




Although previous literature showed that individual efficacy, group efficacy, politicized identity (with women rights movements), and prior political involvement influence participation intention, only prior political involvement was significant across most of the dependent variables (see Appendix C). Since none of the other variables contributed to the regression model, all but prior political involvement was excluded from the model.

I predicted that tie strength and cost of action would influence participation intention. Specifically, I hypothesized that participants who have strong ties with cause supporters on social media would be more likely to engage in high-cost collective action, compared to those who have weak ties with cause supporters **(H1a)**. To test this

hypothesis, I first regressed intention to participate in each of the 7 types of collective action (DV) on the 3 dimensions of tie strength and cost of action (IV), while controlling for prior political participation. As expected, the main effect of cost showed a negative impact of cost on political action across all 7 types of action. In other words, the higher the cost of action, the lower the intention to participate in the action. The main effect of tie strength was largely positive across all the types of collective action except for voting (see Model 1 Table 11a and 11b) and donation (see Model 1 Table 11c). This means that the higher the amount of tie strength, the higher the intention to participate in the collective action.

If my assumption that both tie strength and cost of action influenced intention to participation in collective action was correct, I would expect to see significant effects for the interaction between the tie strength and cost across all 7 types of political action. My assumptions were partially supported. Results from the interaction (affect X cost) in Model 2 of Table 11a showed that the affect dimension of tie strength and cost of action had a statistically significant effect for voting ($B = .240$, $p < .05$) and marching/rallying ($b = .241$, $p < .05$), after controlling for prior political activity. In addition, the interaction (reciprocity X cost) in Model 2 of Table 11c had a marginally statistically significant effect on calling representative ($B = .023$, $p = .06$), after controlling for prior political activity. However, Model 2 of Table 11b showed that there were no significant effects for the interaction (duration X cost) across any of the political action.

To characterize the shape of the statistically significant interactions, I then regressed voting, marching/rallying, and calling representatives on tie strength separately for respondents for when the activity was perceived to be low cost and high cost. I

predicted that strength of ties has a larger positive effect on participation for high-cost compared to low-cost political actions **(H1a)**. To investigate my assumptions, I ran a second OLS regression predicting intention to participate in voting, marching, and calling representatives with tie strength, separately for whether the activity was perceived to be low or high- cost (see Table 12). If my assumptions were valid, I would expect to see significant positive effects for voting, marching/rallying, and calling representatives when these actions were perceived as high cost compared to when they were perceived as low cost.

H1a was partially supported. Results from Table 12 showed that only affect (e.g. trust and sense of attachment) had a statistically significant positive effect on marching/rallying as a high-cost collective action ($B = .144$, $p < .05$) compared to when the activity was perceived as a low-cost action (see graph C). The relationship between the affect dimension of tie strength and high-cost of action was positive. This meant that when cost of action was high, trust and a sense of attachment played a positive role in participation intention. Furthermore, the relationship between the reciprocity dimension of tie strength and high-cost of action was also positive, which meant that frequency of interaction contributed positively to participation intention.

I also hypothesized that tie strength will not influence intention to participate in low-cost activities **(H1b)**. If my assumption was valid, I would expect to see no influence of tie strength on low-cost activities. H1b was supported. Tie strength indeed had no significant effect on voting, marching/rallying, and calling representatives when they were perceived as low-cost activities. Although Table 12 showed that for voting and

marching the relationship between the emotional dimension of tie strength and low-cost of action was slightly negative, none of the relationships were statistically significant.

**Table 11a.** Results for Tie Strength X Cost: Affect

| | **Signing Petitions** | | **Calling Representatives** | | **Donation** | | **Voting** | | **Event Volunteering** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -.954 (.156)*** | -.991 (.582) | -.472 (.084)*** | -.769 (.358)* | -.525 (.113)*** | -.683 (.482) | -.083 (.090) | -.798 (.308)* | -.519 (.120)*** | -.961 (.504) |
| Affect | .151 (.063)* | .150 (.067)* | .070 (.057) | .020 (.082) | .170 (.060)** | .130 (.134) | -.014 (.036) | -.042 (.038) | .185 (.060)*** | .072 (.138) |
| Genpol | .091 (.028)** | .091 (.028)** | .301 (.026)*** | .300 (.026)*** | .187 (.027)*** | .187 (.027)*** | .039 (.016)* | .039 (.016)* | .353 (.028)*** | .353 (.028)*** |
| CostXAffect | | .013 (.194) | | .097 (.113) | | .050 (.149) | | .240 (.110)***** | | .138 (.153) |
| $R^2$ | .079** | .079** | .207*** | .208*** | .114*** | .114*** | .009* | .016* | .240*** | .241*** |
| N | 724 | 724 | 725 | 725 | 718 | 718 | 719 | 719 | 720 | 720 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001*

| | Marching/ Rallying | | Boycotting | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -.543 (.086)*** | -.1.305 (.386)** | -.635 (.080)*** | -1.16 (.334)** |
| Affect | .087 (.054) | -.087 (.101) | .024 (.053) | -.047 (.069) |
| Genpol | .269 (.024)*** | .269 (.024)*** | .156 (.024)*** | .157 (.024)*** |
| CostXEmotion | | .241 (.119)* | | .173 (.107) |
| $R^2$ | .210*** | .214*** | .138*** | .141*** |
| N | 723 | 723 | 712 | 712 |

**Table 11b.** Results for Tie Strength X Cost: Duration

| | **Signing Petitions** | | **Calling Representatives** | | **Donation** | | **Voting** | | **Event Volunteering** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -.979 (.156)*** | -1.52 (.379)*** | -.465 (.085)*** | -.519 (.226)* | -.546 (.113)*** | -.549 (.301) | -.081 (.089) | -.227 (.222) | -.483 (.121)*** | -.566 (.340) |
| Duration | .107 (.150)* | .077 (.054) | .023 (.046) | .011 (.066) | .026 (.049) | .025 (.106) | -.015 (.029) | -.016 (.019) | .174 (.048)*** | .147 (.112) |
| Genpol | .095 (.028)** | .097 (.028)** | .304 (.026)*** | .304 (.026)*** | .194 (.027)*** | .194 (.027)*** | .039 (.016)* | .040 (.016)* | .354 (.027)*** | .354 (.027)*** |
| CostXDuration | | .238 (.153) | | .023 (.091)* | | -.001 (.119) | | .041 (.057) | | .033 (.124) |
| $R^2$ | .077** | .080** | .203*** | .203*** | .104*** | .104*** | .009* | .010* | .243*** | .243*** |
| N | 724 | 724 | 725 | 725 | 718 | 718 | 719 | 719 | 720 | 720 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001; p-value for calling representatives is marginally significant at .067.*

| | Marching/ Rallying | | Boycotting | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -.517 (.086)*** | -.377 (.244) | -.635 (.079)*** | -.876 (.212)*** |
| Duration | .147 (.043)** | .188 (.081)* | .130 (.042)** | .090 (.054) |
| Genpol | .266 (.024)*** | .265 (.024)*** | .149 (.024)*** | .148 (.024)*** |
| CostXDuration | | -.058 (.095) | | .106 (.087) |
| $R^2$ | .217*** | .218*** | .149*** | .151*** |
| N | 723 | 723 | 712 | 712 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001*

**Table 11c.** Results for Tie Strength X Cost: Reciprocity

| | **Signing Petitions** | | **Calling Representatives** | | **Donation** | | **Voting** | | **Event Volunteering** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -1.02 (.190)*** | -.2 (.654) | -.453 (.093)*** | -1.04 (.333)** | -.543 (.123)*** | -.012 (.436) | -.141 (.102) | -.719 (.348)* | -.412 (.135)** | -.518 (.507) |
| Reciprocity | .041 (.042) | .055 (.043) | .036 (.037) | -.038 (.055) | .001 (.039) | .093 (.083) | .003 (.024) | -.009 (.025) | .133 (.040)*** | .115 (.093) |
| Genpol | .091 (.034)** | .092 (.034)** | .304 (.031)*** | .303 (.031)*** | .208 (.032)*** | .207 (.032)*** | .038 (.020)* | .034 (.020) | .338 (.033)*** | .338 (.033)*** |
| CostXInteract | | -.2 (.152) | | .133 (.073) | | -.117 (.092) | | .131 (.075) | | .022 (.102) |
| $R^2$ | .067** | .069** | .200*** | .205*** | .111*** | .114*** | .011* | .016 | .229*** | .229*** |
| N | 590 | 590 | 589 | 589 | 585 | 585 | 585 | 585 | 586 | 586 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001*

| | **Marching/ Rallying** | | **Boycotting** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Cost | -.463 (.092)*** | -.936 (.295)** | -.524 (.089)*** | -.968 (.323)** |
| Reciprocity | .045 (.035) | -.026 (.060) | .108 (.035)** | .075 (.042) |
| Genpol | .271 (.028)*** | .269 (.028)*** | .126 (.029)*** | .125 (.029)*** |
| CostXInteract | | .105 (.072) | | .102 (.071) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $R^2$ | .194*** | .197*** | .118*** | .121*** |
| N | 589 | 589 | 583 | 583 |

| | **Voting** | | **Marching** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low cost | High cost | Low cost | High cost |
| Affect | -.037 (.037) | .151 (.116) | -.053 (.102) | .144 (.063)***** |
| Genpol | .023 (.017) | .158 (.051)** | .150 (.051)** | .305 (.027)*** |
| $R^2$ | .004 | .169** | .039** | .215*** |
| N | 652 | 67 | 219 | 504 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001*

| | **Calling Representatives** | |
|---|---|---|
| | Low cost | High cost |
| Reciprocity | -.008 (.056) | .073 (.050) |
| Genpol | .204 (.049)*** | .367 (.039)*** |
| $R^2$ | .067*** | .244*** |
| N | 261 | 328 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001*

***Hypothesis 2***. To examine whether visibility influenced individuals' intention to participate in collective action based on their tie strength with cause supporters on social media, a linear mixed model (LMM) was performed. LMM supports analysis of a continuous dependent variable and are apt at modeling correlated error and the model is used when observations are not independent, as in the case of the predictor variables visibility (Garson, 2013). The predictor variable was asked about their intention to participate in both high and low-costs of action when their actions were both publicly or privately visible (e.g., high_public, low_public, high_private, low_private).

Linear mixed effects models are also referred to as multilevel models or hierarchical linear models, as those models are variant terms for LMM (Garson, 2013). Since respondents were asked the same set of questions, conceptually the predictor variables were all on the same level rather than hierarchical, nested or clustered within different group levels. Therefore, to avoid confusion, this study will simply refer to the model as a mixed effects model with both fixed and random effects rather than a hierarchical linear model or multilevel model.

The survey respondents represented a sample of supporters from the larger population of WMMN Facebook page supporters. Snijders (2005) explained that to infer about a population from which the "observed units were drawn" rather than to draw conclusions about the specific units themselves, the effect should be modeled as being random (p. 664). Random effects represent a randomly sampled values of a variable and can be generalized to a larger population (Garson, 2013). As such, the impact of respondents on the outcome was modeled as a random effect with a random intercept. Fixed effects on the other hand represent a constant impact on participation intention and

as such, predictors are typically included as fixed effects (Garson, 2013; Snijders, 2005). Since visibility and cost of action groups were predictor variables determined by research design and each respondent had one value of tie strength across all four groups, tie strength, visibility and cost of actions were all modeled as fixed effects.
Individual's need to belong, injunctive norms, and prior political involvement (see method section) were believed to have an impact on individuals' intention to participate, these variables were also included in the model as control variables.

I predicted in hypothesis 2 that an individual's level of tie strength with the WMMN chapter will have a different impact on intention to participate in high and low-cost collective action, depending on whether the action is visible or not. Specifically, I expect that the higher the scores for affect, interaction, or duration, the higher the intention to participate in collective action when participants think their action was visible/public compared to when they think their action was non-visible/private (H2). Conversely, when the action was not visible/private, I expect no effect of tie strength on intention to participate in collective action.

To assess the effects of visibility on participation intention, I dummy coded cost variables into low cost = 0 and high cost = 1. To test my H2 assumptions, I examined the interaction between tie strength and visibility on intention to participate first for activities that were perceived to be low cost, and then for activities that were perceived to be high cost. I expected that the interaction between dimensions of tie strength and visibility would be similar for both high and low-cost activities. To answer H2, I first examined the main effect of visibility and tie strength for low-cost activities and high-cost activities separately. I then added the interaction effect to test my hypothesis. I conducted these two

analyses separately for each of the measures of tie strength - affect, interaction, and duration.

**Low-cost activities**

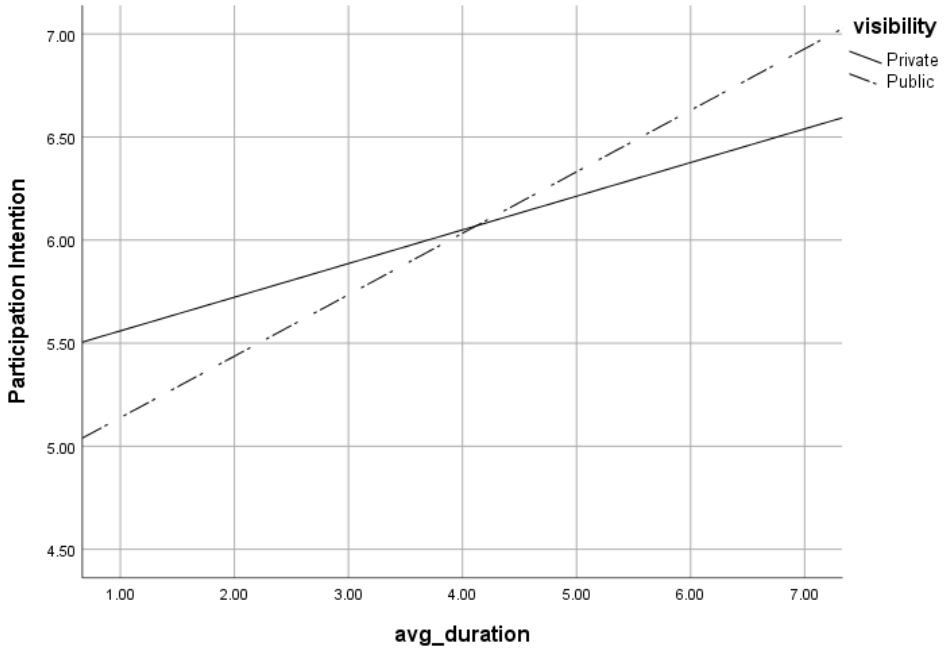
***Affect:*** For low-cost actions, the intention to participate in collective action is .259 ($p < .001$) higher when the action was private compared to when the action was public. The intention to participate in low-cost political action is .448 ($p < .001$) based on the affect dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average affect scores (i.e. feelings of attachment and trust towards WMMN supporters), the intention to participate in low-cost action increases by .448. To examine the effects of visibility and tie strength on intention to participate in low-cost action, the interaction term affect X visibility was added to the model. The interaction was negative, but it was not statistically significant ($B = -.05$, $p > .05$). This means that inconsistent with H2, affect did not interact with visibility to predict intention to participate in low-cost activities.

***Duration:*** The intention to participate in low-cost political actions increases by .250 ($p = < .001$) when the action is private compared to when it is public. The intention to participate in low-cost political action is .202 ($p < .001$) based on the duration dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average duration score with WMMN chapter (i.e. time spent on WMMN Facebook page), the intention to participate in low-cost political action increases by .202.

When the interaction term duration X visibility was added to the model. The intention to participate in low-cost action is lower when the action is private compared to when it was public at a significant level ($B = -.133$, $p < .05$), as shown in Graph E. This

means that for every 1 unit increase in time spent with the chapter, there is a -.13 difference in the effect on participation intention, and the effect is significantly stronger for public activities than it is for private activities, as shown in Graph D. Therefore, consistent with H2, public visibility of action positively influenced intention to participate in low-cost action with every increase of time spent with the WMMN chapter on Facebook.

**Graph D:** Likelihood of participation in low-cost actions: Duration




***Reciprocity:*** The intention to participate in low-cost political actions increases by .184 ($p < .01$) when the action is private compared to when it is public. The intention to participate in low-cost political action is .138 ($p < .001$) based on the reciprocity dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average reciprocity score with WMMN supporters, the intention to participate in low-cost political action

increases by .138. When the interaction term reciprocity X visibility was added to the model, the intention to participate in low-cost actions is lower when the action is private compared to when it was public. However, inconsistent with H2, this interaction was not significant (b = -.044, p > .05).

**High-Cost activities**

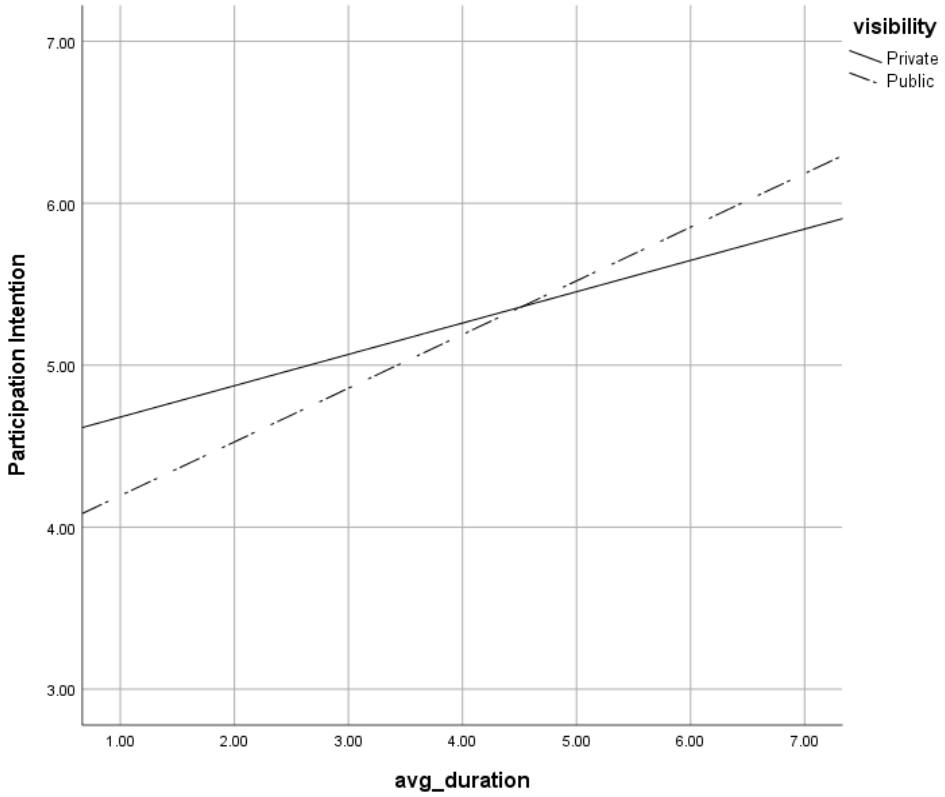
***Affect:*** For high-cost activities, the intention to participate in collective action is .284 (p < .001) higher when the action was private compared to when the action was public. The intention to participate in low-cost political action is .456 (p < .001) based on the affect dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average affect scores, the intention to participate in high-cost action increases by .456. To examine the effects of visibility and affect on intention to participate in high-cost action, the interaction term affect X visibility was added to the model. However, the interaction was not significant (*B* = -.059, p > .05). This means that affect had no impact on intention to participate in high-cost action as visibility increases.

***Duration:*** The intention to participate in low-cost political actions increases by .291 (p < .001) when the action is private compared to when it is public. The intention to participate in high-cost political action is .115 (p = .005) based on the duration dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average duration score with WMMN chapter, the intention to participate in low-cost political action increases by .115.

When the interaction term duration X visibility was added to the model, the interaction was significant, as shown in Graph G (*B* = -.132, p < .05). This means that for every 1 unit increase in time spent with the chapter, there is a -.13 difference in the effect

on participation intention, and the effect is significantly stronger for public activities than it is for private activities, as seen in Graph E. Therefore, duration aspect of tie strength has a positive impact on intention to participate in high-cost action as visibility increases, consistent with H2.

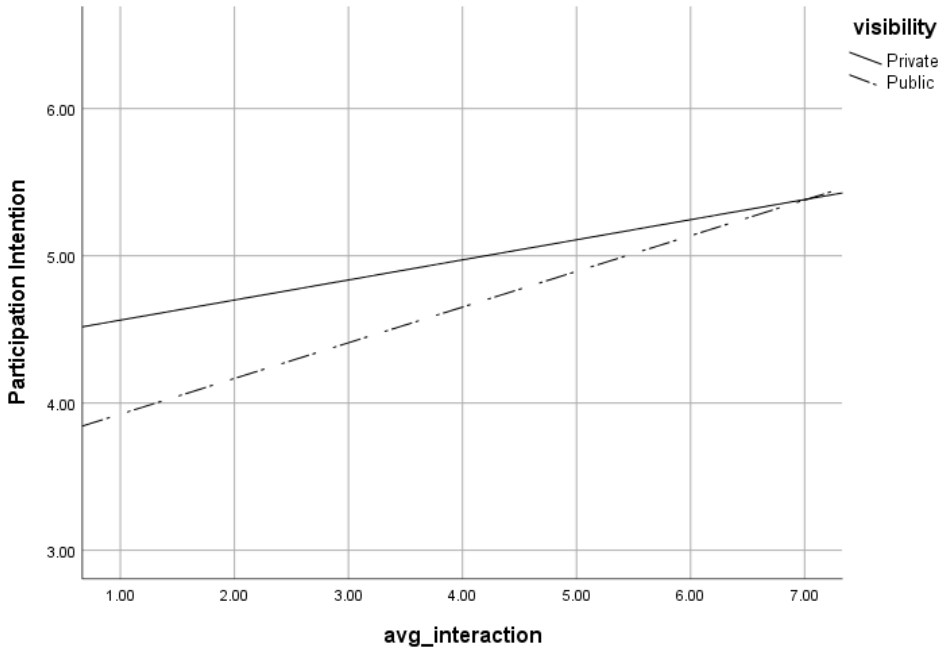
**Graph E:** Likelihood of participation in high-cost actions: Duration




***Reciprocity:*** The intention to participate in high-cost political actions increases by .272 ($p < .001$) when the action is private compared to when it is public. The intention to participate in high-cost political action is .128 ($p < .05$) based on the interaction dimension of tie strength. This means that for every 1 unit increase in average interaction score with WMMN supporters, the intention to participate in high-cost political action increases by .128.

When the interaction term interaction X visibility was added to the model, the intention to participate in high-cost actions is lower when the action is private compared to when it was public at a statistically significant level as shown in graph F ($B$ = -.101, $p < .05$). This means that for every 1 unit increase in the amount of interaction with supporters, there is a -.1 difference in the effect on participation intention, and the effect is significantly stronger for public activities than it is for private activities., as shown in Graph F. Therefore, the reciprocity dimension of tie strength had a positive effect on intention to participate as visibility increases and was consistent with H2.

**Graph F:** Likelihood of participation in high-cost actions: Reciprocity




In summary, consistent with H2, the more public the collective action, the higher the effect on intention to participate in high and low-cost activities for individuals who have strong ties with the chapter. For low-cost activities, as time spent with the chapter

(e.g. duration) increases, the higher the likelihood of participation when the action is public compared to when it is private. Similarly, as the time spent with the chapter (e.g. duration) and extent of interaction with supporter (e.g. reciprocity) increases, the higher the likelihood of participation in high-cost activities when the action is public compared to when it is private. The affect dimension of tie strength had no effect on intention to participate in both high and low-cost activities regardless of the publicness of the action. Hence, H2 was partially supported.

**Table 12a.** Effects of Visibility on Tie Strength: Affect

| | **Low Cost Activities** | | **High Cost Activities** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Visibility | .259 (.0567)*** | .420 (.312) | .284 (.055)*** | .468 (.240) |
| Affect | .448 (.060)*** | .481 (.071)** | .456 (.080)*** | .485 (.089)*** |
| Genpol | .075 (.026)** | .077 (.023)** | .155 (.037)*** | .155 (.037)*** |
| Belonging | -.112 (.049)* | -.110 (.042)** | -.121 (.068) | -.120 (.068) |
| Injunctive norm | .064 (.039) | .065 (.033) | .141 (.048)** | .141 (.048)** |
| AffectXVisibility | - | -.050 (.098) | - | -.059 (.076) |
| N | 1297 | 1297 | 1204 | 1204 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001; Coefficient for visibility shows the effect of visibility when the action is private; Coefficient for AffectXVisibility shows the interaction effect of affect and visibility when the action is private.*

**Table 12b.** Effects of Visibility on Tie Strength: Duration

| | **Low Cost Activities** | | **High Cost Activities** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Visibility | .250 (.056)*** | .556 (.151)*** | .291 (.055)*** | .596 (.149)*** |
| Duration | .202 (.047)*** | .270 (.056)*** | .208 (.064)** | .275 (.071)** |
| Genpol | .090 (.027)** | .089 (.027)** | .167 (.038)*** | .166 (.038)*** |
| Belonging | -.129 (.050)** | -.130 (.050)* | -.143 (.069)* | -.144 (.069)* |
| Injunctive norm | .072 (.040) | .073 (.040) | .155 (.049)** | .154 (.049)** |
| DurationXVisibility | - | -.133 (.061)* | - | -.132 (.060)* |
| N | 1297 | 1297 | 1204 | 1204 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001; Coefficient for visibility shows the effect of visibility when the action is private. Coefficient for DurationXVisibility shows the interaction effect of duration and visibility when the action is private*

**Table 12c.** Effects of Visibility on Tie Strength: Reciprocity

| | **Low Cost Activities** | | **High Cost Activities** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 | M2 | M1 | M2 |
| Visibility | .183 (.060)** | .376 (.213) | .272 (.060)*** | .717 (.218)** |
| Reciprocity | .138 (.036)*** | .161 (.034)*** | .128 (.053)* | .179 (.058)** |
| Genpol | .063 (.030)* | .062 (.030)* | .124 (.043)** | .122 (.043)** |
| Belonging | -.089 (.052) | -.089 (.052) | -.123 (.075) | -.123 (.075) |
| Injunctive norm | .067 (.040) | .067 (.040) | .199 (.053)*** | .199 (.053)*** |
| ReciprocityXVisibility | - | -.044 (.047) | | -.101 (.048)* |
| N | 1065 | 1065 | 999 | 999 |

*Notes:*p< .05 **p <.01 *** p <.001; Coefficient for visibility shows the effect of visibility when the action is private. Coefficient for ReciprocityXVisibility shows the interaction effect of reciprocity and visibility when the action is private.*

## Chapter 6: Discussion & Implications

This research centers on the questions of whether digitally enabled grassroots movements that primarily use social media to communicate, organize, and build social connections, are effective in mobilizing supporters for different kinds of political actions and in sustaining the movement beyond the march on Washington in 2017. In other words, this research examines the role of social media in these movements, and it further investigates whether both cost of action and tie strength influence intention to participate in different types of collective action. Furthermore, this study investigates whether the technological affordances of visibility impacts future participation of collective action based on cost of action and tie strength.

Survey data provided evidence that dimensions of social ties – affect, reciprocity, and duration – interacted with cost of action differently to influence intention to participate in collective action. Specifically, the more trust and attachment supporters feel towards the chapter, the more likely they will engage in actions they perceived to be high cost, whereas weak ties did not appear to have an impact on intention to participate regardless of cost. Similarly, the publicness of an action (e.g. visibility of action) has different impact on intention to participate in collective action depending on the strength of social ties. Specifically, the more time spent on the WMMN Facebook page, the higher the likelihood of participation in low-cost political activities if supporters perceived their action to be visible to other supporters on Facebook. Also, the more time spent reading content from the WMMN chapter as well as interacting with other supporters, the higher

the likelihood of participation in high cost political activities if supporters perceived their action to be visible.

Furthermore, interview data provided insights that explain the differing impact of cost and visibility of action on intention to participate in a range of collective action, as well as the ways Facebook has both enabled and hindered the movement. Technological features of social media facilitated the ease and speed of organizing but the same features may also hinder the movement's ability to build social needs needed to develop long-term commitment and sustain interest in the movement beyond the initial march on January 21, 2017.

**Effects of tie strength on types of collective action**

Interview data showed that Facebook served as a bridge to connect strangers from different social circles with one another based on shared interests, goals, and social identities. Supporting findings from Fisher, Dow, and Ray (2017) about protest participants who attended the Women's March in Washington D.C., interviews with WMMN organizers revealed that MN supporters were more likely to be mobilized by issues that most directly impact their lives based on their social identification. Despite that, the Women's March unity principles drew supporters who were also motivated by issues that impact social identities beyond their own (Fisher et al., 2017).

Therefore, by providing a digital channel for interaction centered on common interests, Facebook helped organizers forged social ties and connect emotionally with supporters despite the lack of physical proximity. These emotional connections grew out of shared political values such as progressive policies and opposition to the Trump

administration. In the case of the WMMN chapter, the founders and some of the earliest organizers of the St. Paul march in response to Trump's inauguration met through Facebook. Through assisting one another to organize the event, the organizers and volunteers involved in the march developed friendships. This shows that regardless of whether the environment is offline or online, spaces that function primarily as "information-sharing venues" can still enable relationship development through "reciprocal expectations" that emerge as volunteers and organizers help one another accomplish tasks related to developing the movement (Arnold, 2011, p. 146).

WMMN organizers also engaged in communication practices that they thought would build a relationship with their supporters. As Krackhardt (1992) explained, tie strength has different dimensions such as emotional intensity, reciprocity, and duration. As the interview findings show, WMMN organizers sought to build social ties through a variety of communication practices that reflect those related dimensions of tie strength. To reiterate the main interview findings, with few opportunities to interact offline, online sharing of content served as the group's primary form of engagement with supporters. Making sure that shared content was reliable became a top priority. The effectiveness of this communication practice is supported by prior research where credibility was an important factor in motivating people to participate in collective action. For instance, Nekmat et al. (2015) found that perceived source credibility impacted the source's ability to influence individuals to cognitively engage more with a message, which had subsequently influenced their willingness to follow through with the source's requests. Consequently, cultivating and maintaining a trustworthy reputation is important to mobilize supporters to engage in future collective action for the movement. In addition to

being trustworthy and reliable, the organizers also engaged in practices intended to foster a sense of community.

WMMN organizers also worked to increase the duration of supporters' visits to the Facebook page. Based on interview findings, they understood that the best way to sustain interest was to organize and participate in collective action and events that were directly relevant to the lives of Minnesotans. In addition, by promoting a range of different actions occurring in the Twin Cities, organizers kept supporters active on their Facebook page. Leveraging Facebook features that allow users to share or like content posted by WMMN, the organizers used Facebook to move supporters from being politically sympathetic to becoming politically motivated and ready to be mobilized for collective action.

Organizers found that the content they promoted and the emotions it typically invoked could spark supporters into thinking about politics, which is why exposure to and sharing of political information has often been linked to political participation (see Halpern et al., 2017; Kam, 2007; Valenzuela et al., 2014). In addition, organizers employed different practices to foster online interaction among supporters. For example, the organizers' decision to let conversations flow organically in the comments section without interrupting was intended to create a space where supporters can interact with one another and feel that their opinions are being heard and supported.

As a channel meant to foster, maintain, and deepen existing connections, Facebook's features such as the comments section, react/like and private messaging capability provided digitally focused organizations that would otherwise have limited opportunities to build connections with supporters offline the possibility of connecting

with supporters virtually. This affordance of Facebook page was valuable, WMMN said, particularly because Facebook was one of the few avenues that organizers could use to engender support for their activities. Jammi, elected Board Chair of WMMN (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018) explained,

> There's no way that we could have a member's meeting for 50,000 people, right. I mean that's just not gonna ever happen. And so, it allows us to communicate with people wherever they're at, right where they're at. And we don't have the capacity to have a meeting every single day with people to keep them informed, and I think that's what Facebook does, is it allows us to push out information, and allows us to educate people, and to invite them to things.

The organizers efforts to build social ties appear to correlate with online supporters' intention to participate in various forms of collective action. Based on the survey results from WMMN Facebook page supporters, the emotional and reciprocity aspects of tie strength influenced intention to participate in some types of collective action, although the duration spent on the Facebook page did not have an impact on participation intention. Cultivating a sense of community through trust and closeness towards members of the WMMN chapter influenced intention to participate in voting, and marching/rallying. In addition, online interactions with the members had an impact on future intentions to participate in calling representatives. When supporters' perception of cost was considered, particularly when marching/rallying was perceived as a high-cost activity, the emotional dimension of tie strength had an impact on behavioral intention. In other words, supporters who have strong emotional ties with members on social media were more likely to engage in marching/rallying when they perceived the activity as having a high amount of risk, time and effort needed, or financial cost.

Interestingly, only voting, calling representatives, and marching/rallying had a significant interaction between tie strength and cost. Tie strength had no effect on intentions to participate in signing petitions, donation, and event volunteering. Surprisingly, even though more survey respondents considered event volunteering to be a high-cost activity compared to marching/rallying, tie strength did not influence future intention to volunteer at events. A possible explanation for tie strength's lack of effect on some types of political action but not others could lie in how those actions were prioritized by the WMMN organizers, which affected the frequency with which they were organized and promoted. Although a formal content analysis of the Facebook page was not conducted to confirm this speculation, an overview of the chapter's Facebook page showed that actions such as calling representatives, voting, and marching/rallying were the most common calls to action in the past year.

Furthermore, interview data from organizers supported the explanation that the relationship between tie strength and types of collective action is related to the priority given to certain political action over others. For instance, voting was a political action that the Women's March movement planned to focus on for the 2018 mid-term elections. It was therefore a "priority" in the chapter's "communication plan all year" and the chapter had many posts in 2018 related to voting and political candidates (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). Marching, rallying, or street demonstrations were also popular political actions regularly encouraged on the WMMN site. The organizers frequently promoted marches and rallies that were organized by advocacy groups who were allies such as Black Lives Matters, Indivisible Students, and Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee. This made strategic sense because issues like police

brutality, immigrant rights, and gun control were highly contested policy issues in 2017 and 2018. Furthermore, calling representatives as a political action was also heavily promoted by the chapter, particularly during the time when bills were being passed and during confirmation hearings. For instance, during the nomination hearing of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, the chapter had multiple calls to action related to calling senators to vote "no" on Kavanaugh's nomination.

In addition to voting and marching/rallying, calling representatives was one of the most effective collective actions according to Mandy, the call-to-action communication lead, who explained the priority given to that collective action. Mandy explained that signing petition was not an action that the chapter promoted frequently because of its perceived lack of effectiveness compared to calling representatives. Conversations with legislators affirmed that calling representatives rather than petition signing was a more effective way for WMMN supporters to express sentiments about a bill or policy. Mandy elaborated:

> When I've been at the governor's office, there's a guy. [He] just sits there, and [he] just tallies every single call that comes in. He has this big piece of paper that he's got, you know Free ID, and public transport. All these types, he's just telling how many people are calling based on something… So then once I saw that, I did a post and it really does make a difference… if you call Klobuchar's office, they write it down. Every time somebody calls, they write it down (M. C., personal communications, February 6, 2018).

Since there were many Facebook posts mobilizing supporters to call specific representatives, the frequency with which these calls to action were posted on the chapter's Facebook page could explain the significance of reciprocity as a dimension of tie strength on this political action. The higher the frequency of promoting calling

representatives as a political action on the Facebook page, the greater the possibility of interacting (e.g. comment/reply or like/react) with the chapter.

Along with petition signing, donation and email volunteering opportunities were not actively or regularly promoted on the chapter's Facebook page. Instead, opportunities to volunteer, to donate and to purchase merchandise were posted on the WMMN website (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). The chapter also had an email list where they sent calls for event volunteering (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). The rationale for emailing a list of volunteers rather than promoting the opportunity on the Facebook page was simply because the organizers did not want "100 volunteers to show up" when they only needed a handful to organize the event (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Hence, organizers preferred to email supporters who have "already identified themselves as wanting to volunteer" instead of sending out a "blanket message" to everyone on the Facebook page (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018).

Organizers said they prioritized certain political actions over others based on the chapter's perception of each action's effectiveness in enabling political change and on the needs of allied organization. The chapter's priority of promoting certain actions over event volunteering, donation, and petition signing on the chapter's Facebook page may have had an impact on tie strength's lack of effect on those actions, simply because of the lack of opportunities to participate in them. In other words, since event volunteering, donation, and petition signing were rarely promoted on the WMMN Facebook page, supporters may not consider those political actions as available or viable to participate in.

From the survey results, the emotional bond aspect of tie strength rather than reciprocity and duration had a stronger effect on intention to participate in collective action. This key finding supported studies that found emotional bonds to people in a social movement group or activist community to be strong predictors of future participation in collective action, although these studies did not examine different dimensions of social ties (see Saunders et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Furthermore, survey results found that when the collective action was perceived to involve high personal risk and cost such as marching/rallying, the emotional quality of tie strength was a significant predictor of future participation. This result corroborated previous findings that identified interpersonal trust and emotional attachment, the affect component of tie strength, as important factors in motivating participation in political actions, especially when risk was involved (see Arnold, 2011; Carson, 1981; Passy & Monsch, 2014; Payne, 1995; Somma, 2009).

Therefore, it is not surprising that trusting supporters of the WMMN chapter and having a sense of attachment to them would have more effect on participation intention compared to other aspects of tie strength. Arnold (2011) explained that supporters of social movements join organizations because they believe that collaborating with like-minded individuals can accomplish shared goals. Since the relationship among members is instrumental, the development of trust becomes necessary for cooperation (Arnold, 2011). More importantly, this finding justified the importance of affect in tie strength, an argument that Krackhardt (1992) had previously made. Consequently, this study supported current literature on the predictive quality of strong ties in impacting

participation intention in collective action, especially those that are perceived to carry high personal cost.

This finding can also aid the communication practices of digitally enabled grassroots movements that rely heavily on social media for organizing. The WMMN chapter organizers relied on practices that they perceived would help build and enhance the community. To help foster emotional bonding, WMMN supporters were encouraged to join chapter organizers at political events that were organized by ally organizations. WMMN supporters often expressed to organizers that they were unwilling to attend a rally or other events if they did not know the other participants. According to Jammi (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018):

> This is what we'd hear is "I don't know that organization. I would go and support them, but I don't want to go by myself." So that's why it's been important for us to show up [at those events]. We're there, you come find us. We'll be your new friend while you're figuring out how to participate with this new organization… You come with us and participate with us... If it's a protest or a march … We're going to this, we will be here, you can come meet us here.

This comment supported findings from previous studies that social connections or bonds with an activist community can be critical in the mobilization process. These studies found that knowing an activist or politically active individual was a strong predictor of future political participation (see Lim, 2012, Passy & Monsch, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012).

WMMN organizers understood the importance of being a familiar face among a sea of strangers, particularly at events organized by allies, thereby providing the chapter the opportunity to be an emotional anchor for supporters who desire to engage in causes organized by other social movement organizations. Jammi further elaborated that the

organizers made it a point to have WMMN supporters present at all the events that the chapter promoted so that supporters do not have to attend them alone (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018):

> A representative from Women's March Minnesota participates in everything that we ask people to go to, so that we're just not sending people to an event. We are at the event… we make sure that we can participate rather than just [say] "Here's 12 things to show up at." We try and find 12 [WMMN supporters] or more that can go and participate in all those [events].

The assurance that other WMMN supporters would be present at actions organized by allies was an expression of support for their growth as an activist helped build stronger emotional bonds with the chapter. As Alicia affirmed, she has built some "really great relationships because of the Women's March" (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). And as the survey findings show, cultivating emotional bonds was one of the most effective ways to motivate supporters to engage in future collective action.

While this study affirmed existing knowledge concerning strong ties, especially in the form of emotional bonds, in motivating participation in high-cost political actions, its findings also challenged several assumptions. These findings have important implications on how future scholars may measure or conceptualize tie strength for their specific population. For instance, current studies on social ties do not parse the different aspects of tie strength. Rather, these studies relied on predetermined social and familial structures to assign tie strength and have tended to focus on either weak or strong ties (but not both) based on these structures. Although it is a common practice in the field to assign tie strength based on existing social structure, key findings from this study revealed that not

all aspects of tie strength were instrumental in motivating intention for future participation in collective action.

Hence, survey findings challenged the practice of presuming emotional bonds or the lack thereof based on preexisting social categories, or prioritizing duration of relationship or frequency of reciprocity over emotional intensity when determining tie strength. Furthermore, since not all dimensions of tie strength affected behavioral intention equally, it may be plausible that its influence is situational based on the group's perception of personal cost rather than assumed cost of action, challenging another common practice in the field to assume cost of action based on activity (see later section for elaboration).

**(Technological) limits to building ties on social media**

Although online interaction or reciprocity among organizers and supporters had a significant impact on calling representatives, this communication practice did not influence other types of collective action, as seen in the survey results. Therefore, even though WMMN organizers responded promptly to questions and concerns, and displayed forms of virtual interaction and support such as likes/reacts, such actions may not be enough to motivate future political participation, particularly activities that involve time and effort and are needed to sustain the movement. Interestingly, the organizers acknowledged that online interactions might not be enough to influence supporters' intention to participate in future collective action, a sentiment that was mostly supported by survey results.

Even though the organizers recognized the importance of social relationships in affecting political participation and have tried to cultivate social ties on Facebook, they did not think Facebook was adequate in fostering those relationships. Specifically, the organizers felt that online display of social support such as agreeing with a Facebook post, reacting to a post, or even signing up for an event on the chapter's Facebook page was not enough to deepen relationships (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Despite their best efforts to promote trust through being transparent and consistent in their Facebook posts and in their direct interactions with supporters online, organizers came to see these social media techniques as indirect ways of fostering a sense of attachment to the chapter. Hence, to the other organizers, the preferred way to build community and get people to talk to one another requires physical interaction.

Although this study did not measure the effectiveness of building ties based on real compared to virtual interaction, findings from this survey questioned the effectiveness of online interactions enabled by social media. Facebook may be great for enhancing existing relationships or building new ones because of features that enable interactions and virtual display of support, but the social media site may be limited in its capability to cultivate stronger social ties without being supported by other forms of communication.

In other words, Facebook may aid organizers in cultivating deeper bonds with supporters who have had prior interaction with the chapter through participating in marches/rallies, meetings, or volunteering. However, the same features that aid maintenance of existing ties may be inadequate or difficult for developing or strengthening ties with supporters who have only "liked" the page but do not frequently

interact with the chapter. For these supporters, the value of WMMN Facebook page may be in the form of informational resources and providing collective action opportunities.

The difficulty in deepening social ties with supporters who are less active with the chapter on Facebook may affect supporters' commitment to the movement. They may be less likely to participate in political activities (e.g. event volunteering or donation) needed to sustain the movement. Although this finding may paint a pessimistic view of grassroots organizers' ability to engender strong ties with supporters primarily by using social media, forging strong ties with organizers is not the only route to participation needed to sustain a movement. In van Laer (2010)'s study of protest participants in Belgium comparing activists who used online communication (e.g. website and emails) as a source of information about upcoming protests and those who did not, he found that the impact of strong emotions and feelings of injustice can lead to protest participation independent of organizational ties.

For instance, emotional responses to "moral shock" can fuel supporters' motivation to participate in political action "even in the absence of formal network ties" with organizers (van Laer, 2010, p. 412). Individual characteristics notwithstanding, numerous scholars have also found the mobilizing impact of strong emotions such as anger or indignation towards incidents of injustice (see Alberici & Milesi, 2003; Ellemers & Barreto, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). Perhaps of more relevance to my study is van Laer's (2010) finding that using online channels for information and to learn about upcoming protest opportunities contributed to higher levels of "group-based anger" compared to those who did not use online channels for informational resources (p. 413). This suggests that even if supporters do not actively

engage with WMMN Facebook page, their passive consumption of WMMN Facebook posts may still have a positive impact on their future participation and level of commitment through continual feelings of group-based injustice.

This survey result must be understood within the context of WMMN, which is a social movement organization. Supporters of Women's March are politically active, many of whom most likely liked the page because they participated in the Women's March in January 2017. Most survey respondents participated in political action in the past year. Furthermore, respondents were already highly politicized with high mean political and group efficacy scores. Therefore, the motivation to participate in collective action may depend less on social ties and more on their individual political predisposition.

As the survey results indicated, prior political involvement played a statistically significant role in contributing to the model in hypothesis 1 across the range of collective action. In other words, prior political involvement was a significant predictor of future political participation over and above cost or tie strength for all actions, supporting previous studies on political participation (see Saunders et al., 2012; Schussman & Soule, 2005). Although Saunders et al. (2012) did not measure cost of action or tie strength, they found that individual characteristics such as political engagement and psychological traits were more important in predicting future protest participation than being asked to protest by organizations. Similarly, Schussman and Soule (2005) discovered that social movement organizations may create the opportunity to protest but individual political predisposition were important to create the tendency to participate.

Interestingly, prior political activity contributed significantly to future participation over and above dimensions of tie strength for the different types of collective action except for voting when the action was viewed as a low-cost activity A possible explanation is that individual psychological characteristics such as political efficacy or politicized identity, traits that would lead individuals to proactively participate in political actions, may vary based on the types of action involved. Prior participation may not have an impact on future intention to vote because of the social norms around voting, particularly for supporters of the WMMN the movement. The Women's March placed voting as central to their goals for 2018 and have engaged in Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaigns. The social expectation around voting combined with the unfavorable political climate towards progressive causes may have galvanized WMMN supporters to vote regardless of previous participation in collective action.

Facebook's sophisticated technological affordances can also create problems for digitally enabled social movements. Facebook's use of a proprietary content preference prediction that distributes content based on the user's previous interactions on the social media site poses a challenge for digitally enabled social movement organizations. In fact, Tufekci (2017) argued that the most important algorithm for social movements organizations is the one Facebook uses to control the content users receive on Facebook. When users interact with content from a source, that action signals to Facebook that the content is relevant to the user, and similar content will show up more often on the user's news feed (Mosseri, 2018). Simply put, the Facebook posts that are featured in one's news feed are from those with whom the individual frequently interacts (Kaun & Uldam, 2018). Due to this, users do not receive all content from the Facebook pages that they like

or follow. Depending on the user's interaction with the WMMN chapter, some of the group's calls-to-action may not appear on supporters' Facebook news feed in a timely manner. Furthermore, since Facebook's algorithm is designed to deliver what it calculates as the most relevant content to each user's News Feed, some WMMN posts may not show up on supporters' news feed at all.

The algorithmic control of content on Facebook impacts the visibility of content published by WMMN and can alter the types of content and messages social movement organizations post, as Tufekci (2017) contends. The amount of interaction supporters has with the content can mean the difference between going viral and being buried in "an algorithmic spiral of silence" (Tufekci, 2017, p. 159). This is particularly so because Facebook "algorithm privileges interaction over recency," wherein posts that get "new replies" gain more exposure regardless of when they were posted (Kaun & Uldam, 2018, p. 2199). Hence, the fewer interactions a supporter have with the chapter's content, the less likely that content from that page will be visible on the supporter's news feed, further reducing future opportunities to interact with the chapter's content online.

Furthermore, algorithmic filtering has a spillover effect that can hinder opportunities to interact with the chapter offline. Supporters may not be aware of collective action opportunities that may allow them to establish bonds with the chapter outside of Facebook if the algorithm decides that a user may not be interested in posts published by the chapter. This feedback loop has important consequences for social movement organizations, wherein algorithmic filtering on Facebook may further deepen the gap between politically engaged supporters and less engaged sympathizers. Therefore, algorithmic filtering may make it even harder for passive supporters to receive

collective action opportunities and informational resources in the news feed, benefits that are typically the reason for joining a social movement organization. This visibility feedback loop caused by algorithms can hinder organizers' efforts to educate and mobilize politically inactive or less efficacious supporters.

Although Klandermans et al. (2008) found that membership in social organizations is related to participation in collective action, particularly because politically interested individuals who are predisposed to political actions join social movement organizations, it would be erroneous to assume that online members of WMMN chapter are politically efficacious or active just because they "joined" the chapter. The difference between traditional organizations and digitally enabled grassroots organizations is the latter's predominance presence on social media. Unlike having to make an effort to attend members' meeting or participate in offline activities to stay involved in an organization, social media has made it easy for people to be part of a movement by liking and following the organization online. In other words, the level of commitment and effort needed to join a contemporary social movement organization is as little as clicking a button online.

WMMN supporters' varying levels of political activity could also be explained by its difficulty in recreating unity around specific issues. As indicated in the interview findings, not every supporter is passionate about the same social cause. Interview data with organizers revealed that causes related to immigration do not draw as much interest compared to reproductive rights. While Facebook may have helped facilitate organizing around Women's March unity principle, which drew protesters motivated by intersectional issues for its inaugural march in 2016, it may be harder to sustain interest in

the movement's unity principle after the inaugural march. Despite the ease of connecting and exposing supporters to intersectional political causes on Facebook, social media may still be unable to overcome enduring differences in political group identity.

This is illustrated by Fisher and colleagues (2017) who discovered that Women's March protesters who were mobilized around environmental issues were less likely to be mobilized by issues that concern people of color. The WMMN organizers' efforts to educate its supporters around issues of intersectionality so that they will "show up" to events that do not directly impact their lives may be hindered by algorithmic filtering as some of its supporters may be less politically interested in causes that do not directly concern them to begin with. In this sense, Facebook may be a poor substitute to other types of communication efforts that are able to directly educate and inform supporters to participate in collective action in support of the movement's unity principle.

Consequently, this calls into question the ability of digitally enabled grassroots organizations to sustain interest in a movement, particularly those that utilize social media as their main communication and organizing channel. Unless organizations have the resources and time to pay and manage sponsored content to bypass algorithmic filtering, it will be difficult for them to build social bonds, a challenge that the WMMN chapter faced. Despite concerns about its ability to help forging strong ties, social media has features conducive to mobilizing supporters with calls to action, particularly activities that require immediate attention. Furthermore, without a physical office, mailing address, phoneline, or meeting space, digitally enabled grassroots organizations often must rely on social media as a main communication channel.

Social media therefore function not just as information channels but as the public face of the chapter. Although building personal relationships may be more difficult with social media, it may be a necessary tradeoff as an efficient organizing tool and the primary link to its supporters. The technological features of social media therefore provide both opportunities and constraints in growing social movements, where the future possibilities of the movement are shaped within the bounds of social media affordances.

**(Re)examining the impact of cost of action**

The WMMN chapter shares many similarities with recent progressive digitally enabled grassroots movements such as Occupy Wallstreet and Black Lives Matter. For instance, these movements use social media as a central communication strategy and street protests, rallies, or demonstrations were the preferred method to display grievances. Street protests, demonstrations, and rallies are common tools or repertoires of contention, particularly for those who identify as liberals or progressive (Saunders et al., 2012; Schussman & Soule, 2005).

Often perceived as a high-cost action, participation in street rallies is considered a symbol of commitment to the movement. Therefore, it is not surprising that these grassroots organizations share similar political tactics as "repertoires of contention are bound in complex ways to existing political ties and ideologies of appropriate modes for making political claims" (Schussman & Soule, 2005, p.1099). However, the common tactic of using street protests, marches, rallies, or demonstrations as an expression of discontent among progressive grassroots organizations may affect how supporters and

organizers of the WMMN chapter viewed these tactics compared to other political actions, as revealed in both the interview and survey data.

As a movement founded on a march, it is not surprising that WMMN supporters expressed a higher likelihood of future participation in marches/rallies/demonstrations compared to boycotting, calling representatives, donating, and event volunteering (see Graph B). In terms of likelihood of future participation, signing petitions and voting were the only two political actions that were listed higher than marches/rallies/demonstrations. Deviating from what scholars often consider a high-cost action, supporters felt that marching and protesting were mid-cost actions. In fact, more supporters considered event volunteering and donating to the chapter as having a higher cost than marching or protesting, challenging what is commonly thought of as high or low risk activities (see graph C).

This could be because many supporters do not view protesting as a risky form of political activity. Rather, they feel street protests as an empowering political tactic. In the interview, Alicia explained that "some women feel really empowered" when they attend a rally because it makes them feel heard and feel like "they've accomplished something" together (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Unlike Black Lives Matters protests where potential clashes with law enforcements posed a risk to personal safety, the largely White survey respondents from the WMMN chapter may not associate protesting with that risk.

In fact, law enforcements have reacted to the two movements differently. The Women's March held in Saint Paul in 2017 was largely peaceful with no arrests of protesters because the organizers had assistance from the St. Paul police department to

ensure an orderly event (Golden & Blanchette, 2017). Although the WMMN chapter has promoted civil disobedience organized by like-minded organizations in the past such as "shutting down traffic" without a permit, these events were not frequently promoted (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). In fact, most of the chapter's calls to action involved collective action that did not put supporters at odds with law enforcers.

Hence, political actions that may traditionally be perceived as a high-cost activity among marginalized communities due to risks of physical harm or being arrested (e.g. Blacklivesmatter, #NODAPL), may be perceived as less costly among WMMN supporters. This could be because of the chapter's lack of conflict with law enforcers as well as the movement's less controversial image compared to other contemporary grassroots movements. It should be noted that the survey data was collected before the arrest of hundreds of Women's March protesters in D.C. who were there to support the abolishment of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Arnold, 2018). While it is difficult to know if supporters from the WMMN chapter were among those arrested, supporters' perception of protests as being less costly than event volunteering and donating may change if the political climate turns hostile towards the movement and its supporters.

Despite the popularity of protest rallies and the high turnout rate for protests related to the Women's March movement, feminist scholars Moss and Maddrell (2017) question the ability of "protests and days of action" to bring about meaningful changes and sustain feelings of indignance to stay salient beyond the first Women's march in D.C (p. 614). Interestingly, these were also concerns raised by the WMMN organizers who

questioned the effectiveness of protests compared to voting, calling representatives, and event volunteering. Although street protests have traditionally been perceived as a concrete and effective way to express dissent, particularly in previous social movements, WMMN organizers do not feel the same way about its role in present times. According to them, "just showing up to a march or a rally or a protest in and of itself" was not going to create the change the chapter desired (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Rather, voting was "the vehicle that's going to make the changes" that they were fighting for as well as "volunteering on a campaign" to help candidates get elected (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Kelly's thoughts about marching reflected the chapter's sentiments towards that action, particularly if supporters participated in for merely symbolic reasons:

> "the problem with a march is, while it's such a strong symbol of solidarity and a literal gathering, you can see the number, how many of those women actually did something in the last year besides march? How many of them actually picked up the phone to call a representative? I think that's where we get lost, and we have to navigate how to best have that conversation. How do we get people to act, versus just show up on that one day, wear their pink hat, and move on?"

The organizers expressed similar thoughts that participating in street protests was not a good demonstration of commitment to the movement and were not enough to cause structural changes. Supporters can "yell all day long" but "nothing will change" (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018) unless they also show "commitment and action" by donating time and money to sustain the movement (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Kelly encapsulated the sentiment felt by fellow organizers (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018):

> "The biggest issue with the principles that we're trying to address and the inequality that we're trying to overcome is just by showing up (to a street protest)

> and saying that you support something, that's great, but you got to take it a step further if you really care about it and you really want to make change... I think that the big thing too is showing how easy it is to do these things, that marching is easy. So is voting. Now, can you help other people? Can you drive people to the polls who maybe can't get there on their own?"

Yet, supporters' lack of intention to volunteer or donate to the chapter and their perceived high costs compared to other political actions put them at odds with what organizers said was needed to sustain, grow, and help the movement achieve its goals in Minnesota. Although collective activities such as marches/rallies/demonstrations are important in raising awareness and making an impact on legislation, organizers said event volunteering and donations are critical for the growth of the movement because organizing political activities require time, effort, and monetary resources.

However, Madestam, Shoag, Veuger, and Yanagizawa-Drott (2013) noted the importance of street protests/marches/rallies for grassroots movements, beyond sending a signal to policy makers about their preferences towards a policy. Analyzing the 2009 Tax Day Tea Party protests, they found that large political protest rallies correlated positively with the way representatives voted in Congress if the protests were in the representative's district. Madestam and colleagues (2013) also discovered that successful protests, measured in terms of attendance, led to more grassroots organizing, monetary contributions to the movement, and increased voter turnout in favor of the Republican Party in subsequent elections. Their findings suggest the usefulness of political protests lies in being able to foster a strong sense of collective group identity (see Klandermans, 2014). People become aware of the scope of shared grievances when they participate in large protests, which can create politically involved individuals (Klandermans, 2014).

As such, participating in large-scale protests may lead people to become politically energized and that momentum can be harnessed to help the movement achieve its goals. Feeling a heightened sense of political activism was supported by interview data in which organizers explained that protesting as a form of political action was valued among supporters because it helped them feel efficacious. Speaking from experience, Kelly said that "seeing all these people come together" supporting issues related to women was very inspiring and transformative (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). This sense of empowerment created a chain-reaction of political activism in some women. For instance, Alicia recalled the number of women who found their "voice at the Women's March" and have started to run for public office or positions of power within their community (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). Hence, even though organizers may perceive marches/rallies/demonstrations to be less direct or effective in countering policies by the Trump administration, its value lies in fostering and deepening a sense of group identity that can spark future activism on behalf of the movement.

Although these findings should be understood within the context of the WMMN chapter, they challenged assumptions scholars have made about participating in street protests, particularly presuming high cost of action or commitment to the movement. The success of a social movement is often measured by the size of its membership, which is reflected in the movement's ability to garner large numbers of supporters in a unified public display of grievances and dissent typically through street protests. Therefore, organized mass protests were often seen as reflecting a movement's organizational strength and supporters' perceived commitment to the movement (see Tilly, 2006; Hsiao

& Yang, 2018). This is particularly true when the ruling party is hostile towards the cause or protesters. Therefore, protesters willingness to sacrifice for the cause through risking personal safety or livelihood was a clear demonstration of commitment. This public display of force and commitment provided legitimacy to grievances and has influenced policy outcomes in previous social movements.

Yet, public display of dissent such as marching/rallying/demonstrating may not be effective enough in America's current political climate because the authenticity of protesters' grievances is often downplayed. The current Trump administration perceives protesters' grievances as a form of diversion used by liberal interest groups rather than legitimate concerns. In addition, as social media has facilitated the speed and spread of information, organizing public display of grievances has become a common occurrence with what progressives consider regular threats to women's rights, civil rights, immigrant rights, environmental rights, and gun control. The frequency of protest occurrences may de-sensitized the public to protests as a powerful and reliable political tactic.

Indeed, the affordances of social media have allowed grassroots organizations without formal structures to quickly "organize on the fly" using digital tools by whomever volunteers first to perform the task (Tufekci, 2017, p. 269). Large-scale street protests can thus be organized with little commitment, effort, and preparation. While the ease of organizing can be empowering to grassroots movements, Tufekci (2017) noted that what digitally enabled movements gain in speed of organizing mass protests, they lose in "resilience and collective decision-making" (p. 269). Tufekci (2017) argued that it is the "long-term work of negotiation and interaction" among members that is necessary to sustain the movement over long periods of time (p. 269). The ways scholars measure

success of social movements in terms of commitment and strength reflected through public display of force may require updating. Hence, America's divisive political climate and evolving social network technologies that make protesting common demand that we assess our prior assumptions about the role of street protests and its ability to affect policy and structural change.

**Impact of technological features on organizing**

As previously mentioned, the interactivity elements of Facebook can foster a sense of social connection with the chapter that increases the likelihood of future political participation. Furthermore, Facebook is a "great way to gain followers," particularly those who are new to activism (K. Erickson, personal communication, January 28, 2018). This is something that the WMMN chapter recognized as an opportunity to empower supporters to become more politically "courageous" (J. Blair, personal communication, January 31, 2018). This finding supports previous research that found that social media activity can encourage users to engage in political action (see Hsiao, 2018; Margetts, 2016).

The technological features of Facebook facilitated the role of organizing through features that promote information diffusion necessary for mobilization. For instance, Facebook helped spread information about events since many supporters only learned about collective action opportunities through Facebook (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018). In addition, posting events on the WMMN Facebook page allows supporters to see the number of participants and friends within their personal network who are interested in attending an event in real time via the Events

Calendar. Seeing the number of interested participants has been shown to promote intention to participate through the pressure of social norms.

In a series of experiments, Gerber and Rogers (2009) found that people's intention to vote in an election was directly impacted by his or her perception of whether the overall turnout rate was high. Therefore, it is likely that supporters may become interested or feel compelled to participate in a political action if there is social information about the people interested in participating in the action (see Margetts et al., 2016). Furthermore, organizers' practice of reminding people who have indicated an interest in attending an event is an effective way to increase participation. In fact, Kam (2007) discovered that when individuals are reminded of their "citizen duty" to participate politically, especially when it pertained to voting, they respond in a way that promotes future participation.

Another key feature that facilitates organizing on Facebook is tagging, which publicizes or make visible one's posts to others within their social network, thereby increasing exposure to one's supporters base. Known as visibility of action, publicizing one's posts or online actions to the larger social network is a main affordance of social media channels. Based on interview data, the organizers recognized that the act of tagging can foster relationships with other like-minded organizations. Mandy acknowledged that it is important to "amplify other people's events and their campaigns" by "tagging them" in the chapter's Facebook posts as a sign of support and partnership (M. C., personal communication, February 6, 2018). Kelly also considered the practice of reciprocal tagging a way of "connecting" with their "partners on Facebook," which can help the chapter build mutually beneficial relationships with allies (K. Erickson, personal

communication, January 28, 2018). The practice of forming partnerships through tagging organizations supporters Weber and colleagues (2018) arguments that the ease at which social connections are formed on social media promotes coalition building with other like-minded organizations.

Although the organizers adopted the practice of tagging other like-minded organizations, they did not extend the practice to their online supporters. Instead, Alicia was the only organizer among those interviewed who tagged friends within her social network for the sole purpose of mobilizing them. The act of tagging friends to motivate them to participate in collective action has the dual benefit of making the post visible to friend's social network to increase message exposure as well as to pressure them to participate in the action due to the influence of social norms, as explained in the literature review chapter. Attesting to the effectiveness of social pressure, Alicia said her practice of tagging friends has been helpful in getting some of her friends to participate in political actions. Recounting an example of when she tagged her own friends (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018):

> I think there's that personal component when someone knows that you're doing (the action) and especially if I tag them and ask them to do it, then there's that accountability piece…in my district with Erik Paulsen, if it's a call to action about him, I will tag everyone I know (who) lives in my district (because I) want them to see the action and to do it.

Despite the usefulness of tapping into social pressure to motivate friends to participate in collective action, the WMMN chapter has yet to adopt this practice with its supporter base. However, survey findings indicate the value of leveraging the affordance of visibility in the mobilization process, especially for supporters who have strong ties with the chapter. Based on survey findings, the perception that other members will see

their actions if organizers tagged and shared them on Facebook influenced supporters' behavioral intention in collective action. Simply put, strength of tie with the chapter mattered for high visibility actions. People who spent more time with the chapter and had higher levels of interaction with supporters were more likely to participate in visible actions than those who did not.

While previous studies found that individuals were more likely to perform an action when they know their action was public compared to when their action is private, findings from this study demonstrate that strong ties with the chapter have a stronger effect on participation intention when supporters think their actions are public compared to when they are private (see Haenschen, 2016; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Margetts et al., 2016; Panagopoulos, 2010). In fact, survey results show that supporters were more likely to participate in collective action when they think their action is private compared to public, thereby supporting the argument that tie strength matters for social pressure tactics.

Public visibility of action increases the likelihood of behavior that conforms to social norm is well documented in studies on voting behavior as voting is seen as a civic duty and social obligation within America. For instance, Mann (2010) demonstrated the effectiveness of using social pressure methods in motivating politically inactive individuals to participate in voting. In an experiment, Mann (2010) found that a "significant increase in (voter) turnout" among unmarried women who had a "low probability of voting in the 2007 Kentucky general elections" after social pressure techniques were applied (p. 403). Gerber and Rogers (2009) explained that an individual's behavior aligns with her or his beliefs about how others in their group will

act in a specific situation, and those beliefs have been known to powerfully influence an individual's behavior across a range of actions.

Similarly, as a social movement centered around political action, participation in collective action is a social norm of being a supporter of the Women's March. Hence, the motivation underlying norm-compliant voting behavior, particularly the activation of influences such as shame/guilt or pride/prestige, can also explain behavioral intention to participate in collective action for the Women's March movement (see Margetts et al., 2016; Panagopoulos, 2010). As previously elaborated in the literature section, supporters may engage in high-cost activities when they know their actions will be visible to other supporters to avoid feeling ashamed or to show off their level of commitment (see Panagopoulos, 2010), especially when they have strong ties to the group. Both shame[18] and pride have been found to powerfully impact political participation, particularly when social surveillance such as visibility of action is employed to mobilize supporters (Panagopoulos, 2010).

Although many studies that showed the positive influence of social pressure on behavior used experiments centered on offline social pressure techniques (e.g. canvassing, mailing, phone calls), more recent studies have investigated its effectiveness online with positive results (see Haenschen, 2016; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Margetts et al., 2016). In fact, the affordances of social media that facilitate relationship maintenance and social connections such as visibility of action (e.g. likes/react/tagging) make social media

[18] In a field experimental study, Panagopoulos (2010) found stronger empirical evidence that activating negative feelings of anxiety or shame was more effective than activating positive feelings of pride in promoting political behavior. According to the study, shame motivated both low-and high-propensity voters whereas feelings of pride affected only high-propensity voters.

naturally conducive to social pressure techniques. Margetts and colleagues' (2016) lend support to existing studies that show digital and social media as being able to replicate social pressure to a large audience. By facilitating interaction among audiences within an individual's social network and making political actions and beliefs visible to the network, social media increases exposure to the social norms of the network, thereby enabling the influence of social pressure on participation.

Therefore, it makes sense that survey findings show that high levels of reciprocity and duration had a positive and significant effect on intention to participate in high and low-cost actions when supporters think their actions will be visible to other supporters. More specifically, the survey results showed that higher amount of time spent with the chapter can lead to participation intention in low-cost political activities as perceived publicness of their action increases. However, higher levels of interaction along with higher amount of time spent with the chapter led to intention to participate in high-cost political activities as perceived publicness of their action increases. These findings demonstrate the influence of social norms and social pressure in affecting intention to participate in collective action. For instance, higher levels of reciprocity and duration with the WMMN chapter can acculturate supporters to the social norm of participating in collective action. Furthermore, the more active supporters are with the chapter, the higher the pressure of being norm-compliant. This is because social benefits or drawbacks (e.g. feelings of pride or shame) would likely carry greater weight for active supporters than it would for non-active supporters.

While survey findings showed that average time spent with the chapter predicted participation intention in low-cost actions, higher levels of interaction among supporters

and higher time spent with the chapter predicted participation in high-cost activities. Furthermore, visibility had a higher impact on intention to participate in low-cost collective action than high-cost collective action. This is not surprising because due to the higher levels of risk, time, and effort involved in high-cost actions, supporters may need more persuasion or encouragement to participate in high-cost actions. Therefore, increased interaction among other supporters through discussions and virtual symbols of support (e.g. like/react) on Facebook may be necessary to motivate them to participate in high-cost actions when they perceive their actions to be visible to the supporters of WMMN Facebook chapter.

These findings suggest that the WMMN organizers' current approach to facilitate and increase interaction among supporters, and post relevant content could increase mobilization in collective action, especially when paired with social pressure tactics. The practice of making interaction with and among supporters a priority is demonstrated by their attitude towards commenting or engaging with their supporters on Facebook (A. Donahue, personal communication, February 11, 2018):

> I think as much as we can interact with people, and there are moments when I think we do need to take the conversation to a private setting, but for the most part, if we can address concerns right there (on Facebook), we should.

The rationale for this approach is not only to provide clarification or to assuage concerns but to also allow an opportunity for supporters to interact with one another.

Even when organizers see other users write disparaging remarks about the movement or chapter on Facebook, they do not interfere with the natural flow of conversation. Instead, they let their followers "have that conversation" and engage with one another (J. Blair, personal communication. February 11, 2018). By not controlling

conversations on Facebook and allowing discussions and even disagreements to occur organically online can be beneficial to the chapter. As explained by Yardi and Boyd (2010), interactions and conversations with both like-minded individuals and different-minded individuals can strengthen supporters' identification with the movement. Hence, the more interaction supporters have with one another and with the chapter on Facebook, the stronger they will identify with the movement, making social pressure tactics more effective because they will care about how the rest of the community perceives them.

Although the impact of visibility can increase participation via social pressure, some scholars who study voter mobilization have argued that social pressure tactics, particularly those that focus on shame or guilt, may illicit backlash and negative reaction from supporters who oppose the public pressure of having to participate politically (Green & Gerber, 2008; Mann, 2010). As such, Mann (2010) recommended the subtle use of social pressure tactics and to employ the practice selectively for specific campaigns. Scholars such as Margetts and colleagues (2016) also argued that while visibility has been found to increase participation, it may not always be the most efficient or effective way to promote participation.

Specifically, Margetts and colleagues (2016) found that at the individual level, the publicness of an action has a greater effect in driving participation. However, at the collective level, social information such as amount of donation collected, number of people attending an event, or number of volunteers who signed up for an event was more effective in motivating participation than visibility of action. This is because "rational individuals" were able to "target their resources" strategically in areas where they felt the need was the greatest or that their contribution will not be wasted on actions that they

perceived to be ineffective (p. 201). Hence, in some situations, social information rather than social pressure may be more effective in encouraging supporters to direct resources to areas where they will have the most impact (Margetts et al., 2016). In other words, social movement organizers need to be strategic about when and how they should rely solely on social pressure tactics via the affordances of social media as a mobilization strategy.

It is worth noting that based on cost of action, affect among supporters had the strongest effect on intention to participate in high-cost actions, whereas social ties had no effect on intention to participate in low-cost actions. However, time spent with and reciprocity among supporters had the strongest effect on intention to participate in low and high-cost activities when supporters perceived their actions to be visible to other supporters. This suggests that even if feelings of trust and attachment might be difficult to engender on social media alone, particularly for resource-poor grassroots organizations, encouraging interaction among supporters online and increasing time spent on the chapter's social media page can still have a positive effect on supporters' intention to participate in high-cost political actions and an even stronger effect on low-cost activities through social pressure tactics.

Since Facebook algorithms affect the content received by supporters and the dimensions of tie strength are correlated with each other, the more effort social movement organizers invest in interaction and time spent with the WMMN chapter on Facebook, the higher the chances of those supporters receiving their information on Facebook. This will also increase the chances of building affective ties with the chapter.

This in turn will a create a virtuous cycle that can be powerful in helping digitally enabled contemporary movements achieve their goals.

While it is often tempting to overemphasize social media's features in enabling grassroots movements, remembering movements that predated social media can provide insights into what is truly unique about social media's role in contemporary grassroots movements. For instance, Klatch (2001) discovered three stages in the formation of a feminist identity, which is an important predictor in whether women will participate politically on behalf of other women, in her research on the feminist movement during the 1960s. The three stages included identification of gender inequality, discovering ways to interpret gender discrimination, and the construction of a collective identity. Arguably none of these stages related to the development of the feminist movement required social media.

Similarly, acts of resistance during the civil rights movement were organized without social media. Comparing contemporary grassroots movement such as the Women's March with the sit-in movement organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the civil rights era is particularly important due to some key similarities between the movements. Like the sit-in movement, contemporary grassroots movements tend to be decentralized, leaderless, and grassroots in nature, as opposed to being led by conventional organizations such as churches or nonprofit organizations (see Carson, 1981; Chafe, 1980; Morris, 1984). In the early stages of developments, these movements also appeared to occur suddenly and spread swiftly to different locales. While social media has often been credited for the rapid diffusion of information and resources that facilitated the proliferation of grassroots

movements today, the sit-in movement of the 1960s demonstrated that swift mobilization could be achieved without social media.

Importantly, these movements showed that the prowess of the Women's March and the sit-in movement could largely be attributed to the organizers' savviness in utilizing their personal communication networks, particularly for conscious-raising, organizing, and mobilizing. However, it was not solely communication networks that made the movement successful. More importantly, in both instances, the movements were an expression of long-suppressed anger and frustration towards being marginalized against. In other words, the community was already primed for political participation and just needed an aptly branded event such as the Women's March or the sit-in movement to mobilize them.

Consequently, seen through the lens of older movements, it is not difficult to conceive of social media's role in contemporary social movements such as the Women's March as little more than a communication tool to achieve organizational goals. After all, organizing and mobilizing against injustice and oppression are part of human nature and politicized individuals will be moved to participate politically, with or without social media. Yet, it is precisely social media's central emphasis on relationships that enhances the ability of organizers to leverage their social networks. Social media has allowed politicized individuals the ease and speed of organizing and participating politically and has provided a more efficient communication channel for politicized individuals to share resources and organize large-scale political events.

Compared to movements that predated social media, the ease with which politicized individuals can connect with others outside their personal network through social media is critical. Instead of having to rely on well-connected leaders,[19] authority figures or charismatic church minsters, politicized individuals can form or be part of an activist network without needing an information broker. In this sense, social media provides the scaffolding or infrastructure needed to link people of the aggrieved population into an organized base of mass political action. The strength of communication networks from traditional organizations such as churches and relationships with charismatic ministers, one of the foundational blocks of the civil rights movement, may therefore be less crucial in contemporary society.

Furthermore, based on interview and survey data, social media has lowered the barriers for sympathizers and politicized individuals to form organizational ties with social movement organizers, supporting previous research that illustrate the significant of organizational ties among individuals for collective action. The public visibility of action on social media, in turn, increased the ease with which organizers can leverage social pressure techniques within a social media environment to motivate and mobilize participation in collective action. As individuals become less likely to become long-term members of institutionalized social change organizations, social movement organizations are transforming in response to their communication practices (Thorson, Edgerly, Kligler-Vilenchik, Xu, & Wang, 2016).

[19] An important figure during the sit-in movement was Ella Baker who traveled a lot and was on many different political organizations during the civil rights movement. Her travels allowed her to connect individuals within SNCC to multiple networks such as the NACCP and SCLC (Ransby, 2003).

In the end, it would be erroneous to assume that social media is the reason for the rise of contemporary grassroots movements. It would be equally erroneous to assume social media does not impact contemporary social movement organizing. Social media facilitates social connections, allowing social movements to connect unaffiliated movement supporters with other politicized individuals and social movement organizations, providing different ways to organize and communicate. Like any new communication channel, social media creates opportunities and limitations, and alters the nature of grassroots organizing, for good and for bad.

## Chapter 7: Epilogue

Since Facebook facilitates the development and maintenance of social relationships, it is possible that supporters may have interactions with other supporters and WMMN organizers outside of the chapter's Facebook page. It is also not uncommon for friendships to form through connections forged on Facebook, thereby deepening the effects of tie strength and visibility of action on participation intention. Despite technological limitations that might hinder the formation of deep bonds necessary for long-term commitment, empirical findings from this study support previous studies on the usefulness of social media for resource-poor grassroots organizations.

Specifically, this study supports previous research on the importance of strong ties as a predictor of participation in high-cost actions (see Passy & Monsch, 2004; Somma, 2009; McAdams, 1999; McAdams & Paulsen, 1993; Tremayne, 2014; Valenzuela, 2014). Although this study contradicts research on the importance of weak ties for low-cost action, since it found that weak ties had no effect on intention to participate in low-cost action, it supports previous studies that found individual characteristics (e.g., having a politicized identity) to be a key predictor of participation regardless of ties to social movement organizations (see Saunders et al., 2012; Schussman & Soule, 2005). Furthermore, it also supports previous research on the positive impact of public visibility on behavior and participation (see Haenschen, 2016; Jeong & Lee, 2013; Margetts et al., 2016).

Although the survey was promoted as a sponsored post to bypass algorithmic filtering, it is still important to recognize that there may be a level of self-selection among supporters who took the survey. Those who participated in the survey were likely to be

politically active and supportive online members of the chapter compared to those who did not take the survey. Most survey respondents are also white, middle-class and college-educated, a demographic that is known to be politically involved (see Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Schussman & Soule, 2005). Since the survey questions focused on socially desirable norms within the movement such as participation in voting, marching, or calling representatives, respondents may overreport their past political activity or future intention to participate in collective action. Furthermore, many survey participants know people in their personal social circle who are also online supporters of the WMMN chapter. Hence, it is quite possible that these participants' sense of tie strength with the chapter may be influenced by their personal connection with friends/colleagues/acquaintances in the chapter.

In addition, this study focused specifically on the WMMN chapter and since every organization uses different communication practices and mobilization tactics, interview and survey results may not be generalizable to other grassroots movements. The unique attribute of the Women's March movement, where supporters of the movement are not united by a single cause or issue but by their mutual dislike of Trump's policies and rhetoric may also limit the applicability of these findings to recent grassroots movements that are centered on single causes or specific group identities (e.g. police brutality or class). Hence, the extent to which findings from this study applies to other movements should be viewed with these caveats in mind.

However, this study was still able to contribute to current literature by raising important questions about scholars' practice of presuming cost of action solely based on the political action itself as well as the practice of presuming social ties based on

predetermined social structures. Interview and survey data also challenged us to rethink the yardstick of street protests as a symbol of commitment to the movement, particularly for progressive movements. Although this study supported previous findings on the positive impact of strong ties and visibility on participation intention, previous studies did not investigate the aspects of tie strength or perceived cost that might affect participation intention. It is worth mentioning that despite the three dimensions of tie strength being correlated, this study adds to the existing literature by empirically showing the aspects of tie strength that has the greatest effect on collective action based on perceived cost and visibility of action. While previous studies have argued that a sense of community, interaction, and trust among protesters or supporters may potentially lead to political participation, this study empirically tested and supported those assumptions.

Furthermore, this study showed that the effects of affect, reciprocity, and duration on high and low-cost political action have practical applications for grassroots organizers who are using social media to mobilize supporters for collective action. The findings showed the importance of cultivating higher levels of reciprocity and time spent with the chapter to increase the impact of visibility on participation in high and low-cost activities. In other words, practices that generate social pressure through visibility of action would be more effective among online supporters who spent more time interacting with the chapter online. Similarly, communication practices that cultivate more trust and sense of community among supporters will be more effective in mobilizing supporters for actions that are perceived to be high cost.

Therefore, these findings could be useful to social movement organizations seeking to create messages and practices to energize, mobilize, and sustain its supporters

on social media. For instance, more effort may be needed to engage in communication practices that cultivate or enhance emotional closeness among supporters of the chapter, particularly to mobilize them for high-cost actions. Such practices could include featuring supporters engaged in collective action, profiling politically active supporters, and amplifying experiences or messages by supporters. By creating such opportunities, this may increase opportunities for organic interaction with other supporters and may further deepen a sense of community. Lastly, relying on online interaction and relevant content to increase time spent on the Facebook page may not be enough to motivate participants to engage in high-cost action, unless those communication practices are paired with social pressure messages that leverage visibility of action. Hence, findings from this study can help social movement organizers modify communication practices and leverage visibility of action to more effectively mobilize supporters for specific forms of collective action.

While this study investigated social ties as a pathway to mobilization, other studies have noted the function of emotions as a route to mobilization without strong or formal ties to social movement organizations (see van Stekelenburg, 2013; Stürmer & Simon, 2009). Future research can therefore investigate the effectiveness of Facebook messages in eliciting strong emotional responses (e.g., sense of injustice, grievances, fear, or anger) without social ties to organizers. Since this study found that emotional ties are important for political participation, future research can also investigate whether Facebook messages are effective in building a sense of intimacy and bond with supporters who only have an online relationship with the chapter. Future study could also understand how current WMMN supporters formed a sense of closeness or bond with the

chapter on Facebook. Survey results from this study also prompted speculation that the positive effect of tie strength on some collective action but not others was related to the ways organizations prioritize the action. Future research could therefore examine Facebook posts to confirm this speculation.

Despite some benefits of social media, this study has shown that the same affordances that facilitate organizing may also hinder the ability to cultivate emotional intensity such as close bonds and attachments that are necessary to sustain movements. As indicated by interview data, it is insufficient to rely on social media alone to sustain a movement because solidifying bonds can be difficult without physical interaction. Hence, the role of social media may be limited to conscious-raising, recruiting supporters, and mobilizing them for specific political campaigns, but may not be adequate for sustaining participation in the movement without creating strong bonds.

In an era where people form and maintain relationships on social media, as well as rely on these channels to obtain information, grassroots organizations with limited resources must find a balance between organizing and community building. In some ways, critics of digitally enabled grassroots movement such as BlackLivesMatter, OccupyWallStreet, and the Women's March have valid reasons to question the movements' effectiveness in enacting policy changes and remaining sustainable without conventional structures to procure finances, resources, and manpower. These criticisms typically arise when critics compare digitally enabled grassroots movements to social movements of previous decades where organizers spent immense effort and time building strong networks and relationships offline.

However, it is often easy to forget that social media has also made it possible for a core group of dedicated organizers to keep online supporters politically engaged and active with relatively few resources, as exemplified by the WMMN chapter. The low barriers to entry (e.g., liking an organization online) to becoming a part of social movement organizations and receiving benefits through interaction, discussion, and informational resources on social media could still be beneficial in sustaining interest in the movement, and can be harnessed for future mobilization, as indicated by my study.

Instead of hundreds of dedicated supporters performing multiple collective action for the movement, social media has made it possible for large number of supporters to participate in their own way either virtually through spreading information and collective action opportunities, or by participating in different forms of political action based on their comfort level and rhythm of their daily lives. In fact, a recent study found the level of political engagement and commitment for individuals who like a Facebook group may not be so different from those who joined a traditional organization (see Ekström & Sveningsson, 2019).

Although social media has not revolutionized the ways individuals organize and participate in grassroots movements, one should not overlook the impact of social media on the nature of these movements. Grassroots movements are evolving due in part to the affordances of social media that have encouraged citizens to form "loosely organized groups and individualized networks" rather than the formal "membership and long-term commitments" typically expected of traditional political organizations (see Ekström & Sveningsson, 2019, p 155). These changes are also due in part to cultural shifts such as

the shorter lifecycle of issues in our collective consciousness brought on by the speed of information dissemination.

Consequently, the changes caused by contemporary social movements that rely on social media may look different from what critics have come to expect from previous social movements. The expectation of social movements today is similar to what Tufekci (2017) suggested, where effectiveness is measured by the ability to "set the narrative, to affect electoral or institutional changes, and to disrupt the status quo" (p. 191). As a movement barely into its third year, it remains to be seen if the Women's March can achieve these goals.

Despite these concerns, the impact of the movement cannot be ignored. For instance, the Women's March has helped raise society's consciousness around issues of sexism and misogyny, as evident by the #MeToo and #TimesUp hashtag movement (see Felton, 2018). Furthermore, WMMN's efforts of calling Governor Mark Dayton to veto specific bills during the 2018 legislature session proved effective, although it remains to be seen if those tactics would still be effective if Minnesota had a republican governor rather than a democrat.

Only time will tell if the Women's March movement is too idealistic in pursuing a unity philosophy and for believing that a passion for women's rights in and of itself is enough for group identity. In fact, the movement's decision not to develop a strong group identity due to its unity principles may be one of its greatest strengths but also one of its major weaknesses. The movement may be able to mobilize massive crowds to participate in street protests, but it can also quickly fracture along group identities when policies, scandals, or controversies force its members to take sides based on their identity.

Perhaps the movement best exemplifies the power of collaboration – that diverse identities can work together and strengthen one another rather than be weakened by differences, even for a short while; that people will take to the streets in protest for the first time as a show of support for progressive values (Moss & Maddrell, 2017). Although social movements have predated the use of social media, recent grassroots movements reflect our present time, one where society is heavily entrenched in digital culture. Society's heavy reliance on social media has forced scholars and grassroots organizers to rethink the future of social movements – its repertoires of contention, its organizing tactics, and its very nature.

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## Appendix A: First Level codes

| Code | Definition | Key explanations, examples, direct quotes |
|---|---|---|
| Showing up | Description of what showing up means. | Participating in collective action, participate based on topics of interest rather than types of action. Interest in marches is based on issue or focus. The need to participate more often instead of one day.<br><br>"but I think it also depends on the call to action. It depends on the thing. The tax bill was obviously pretty popular because it was so much, but here was a bill on CHIP funding, children's health insurance. It just didn't fare as well"<br><br>"we had our anniversary event and really tried to focus on commitment and action and helping people understand that it's important to show up just on the anniversary of the Women's March to march, but to show up every week, every month"<br><br>"when we host an event we see different people. So it depends on the focus the pavement is on like legislation gets one kind of person, reproductive justice gets one kind of person. It depends on the topic when we're participating in the activist community" |
| Building a connection with strangers | Description of how organizers met to become part of WMMN | Finding and linking up with like-minded strangers. Provided the opportunity to link up with people they would have never met without Facebook.<br><br>"it started as comments on a thread in a group and then I think we private messaged each other and then we created our own Facebook group… But no, |

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| | | Bethany, Joanne and I were all strangers prior to the planning. And we brought on a fourth person to help with fundraising"<br><br>"so I think it allowed us to get connected with another, like the organizers 'cause we didn't know each other and there's so many other women that came on board that we would have never known. I was not in that circle, in that network, and so it really allowed us the opportunity to get connected with people that we would have otherwise never known." |
| FB as communication channel | Description of why Facebook was chosen as a main communication channel | Choice of Facebook as a primary communication platform is based on comfort and familiar with the platform. Chosen because of features that facilitate event organizing, such as the Event Page. Convenience and ability to virtually connect with thousands of supporters without space or time constraint.<br><br>"Because my strongest social media platform is Facebook…But Facebook is really where I live and so it was a good fit"<br><br>"Because I don't know how to promote this stuff apart from posting stuff on Facebook"<br><br>"like maybe people go on Twitter to find out what's happening but there's no events calendar on Twitter. I mean, you have to scroll through all of the things to find anything, whereas with Facebook you can go to the event section on our page and look at hundreds of events that we have going on. So, that's really why we use Facebook is because of the event page"<br><br>"If you were to send out a call on Facebook, right, it's hard to be real |

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| | | targeted. And it's hard to gather an RSVP, we do use a lot of Facebook Events for getting information out 'cause then we can see how many people are interested. We can see who's actually going to show up, and we can have direct messages to them. That's one way that we've really made the channel smaller, is really with the Facebook Events"<br><br>"... There's no way that we could have a member's meeting for 50,000 people, right. I mean that's just not gonna ever happen. And so it allows us to communicate with people wherever they're at, right where they're at. And we don't have the capacity to have a meeting every single day with people to keep them informed, and I think that's what Facebook does is it allows us to push out information, and allows us to educate people, and to invite them to things. Tell them about other groups and other happenings, and then they can decide their level of participation."<br><br>"I mean no one's picking up the phone and talking to each other. In terms of grassroots, in terms communicating with other organizations, it all happens through this…. I think it makes initial contact much, much easier, much broader. Some of its strengths are in communicating and linking people up"<br><br>"I think part of it was the founder of Women's March Minnesota, she was all in on social. She calls herself a social media activist. She really focuses a lot of her personal time to her social media. There's nothing wrong with that. It's just a preference, but here preferences took over the ... I guess she applied her preferences |

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| | | to the work of Women's March Minnesota as an organization"<br><br>"We will have calls to action and stuff on Facebook. We're going to put content out on Facebook. There's obviously no way around that"<br><br>"Yeah, I think Facebook is definitely a good way to help grow that [base] and track it. Obviously you want to have that presence. I wouldn't say you never not want to have a presence there, because there are a lot of people there"<br><br>"But I really think that we utilize the Facebook group business page pretty regularly to educate and to do calls to action because we're continuing to try to drive that engagement and right now people are engaging on social media [on Facebook]." |
| Role of FB | Description of what organizers think is the main role of FB | Role of Facebook page as organizer and informational channel but there is a desire to become more of an educator, and community builder and engaging with supporters as a priority.<br><br>"Yea I would think we would weigh heavily into that [channel to provide multiple collective action opportunities…I'm hoping that role will change, we really need to do a better job of educating"<br><br>"I see it as education and then driving action… I think we did a poor job of educating people about what the issue was before we marched because people were just outraged"<br><br>"because I think building the community is very important to share inspirational |

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| | | quotes, and those posts that really, yeah, kind of inspire people to act or to get involved that rally around something. But I do think that sharing information is also very important. I guess I would say for the use of Facebook, I'd rather see it used as a community building tool than an informational tool."<br><br>"We got you." Try to engage in some way too with that as you share information. I think I would want to prioritize engagement for sure."<br><br>"It's definitely more…I would say right now it's … We do get a little bit of that community building but it is very focused on I think the calls to action and informing people or creating awareness… I hope to really pivot into that [educator] role a little bit more as we continue to build… to be able to educate people… about topics and why they're important and what we can do about them"<br><br>"Our three things, education, engagement and [crosstalk]. Informing people, giving people information, and giving them opportunity to engage." |
| Debating prominence of Facebook | Description about the limits of Facebook to WMMN | No static pages for volunteering opportunities, limits to it being a primary communication channel, need website for branding purposes, people zone out on social media and are not really engaged. Information overload may overwhelm, and people might tune out. Not the best channel for specific volunteer positions because it is too untargeted and public.<br><br>"I don't think it's a bad thing to have a really strong Facebook presence. I think it's a really great way to connect with people, but if you're trying to connect to a |

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| | | wider audience, you have to be in multiple places. You can't just be on Facebook, because not everyone is on Facebook or checks it all the time"<br><br>"but the newsletter is a more effective way to get that information right in front of them, right into their email inboxes, get them the information they care about"<br><br>"So, our website really is like an information hub. We have a calendar that has events. We've got a blog section where different people from our organization will write op-ed pieces. It's where we've got a donation button. It's where we've got our shop button and… And I know social media is so overwhelming that we're trying to get people off of that so that way they can actually digest what we're doing, who we are, ways that they can get involved 'cause we have our section for volunteering. So, really just trying to help them feel part of the Women's March community as much as possible."<br><br>"When I saw it on Facebook, I just didn't pay attention, because it's so much more mindless I think with Facebook, because you're just kind of like ... I don't know. I feel like a lot of people take that as a moment to just take a break from whatever else they're doing. They're zoning out. I feel like you're a little bit more engaged when it's from your email."<br><br>"people think Facebook first when they think communications, and they're not thinking holistically about our brand, and the fact that we are a brand"<br><br>"it only takes three or four volunteers to pull that event off. So if we were to put |

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| | | that out on Facebook we might get 100 people that want to show up to volunteer for that event, and it's a miss in the messaging… So that's really how we've been communicating to people is people that have come to us over the course of the year we have that email list. So when we an opportunity to volunteer that's how we're talking to them. People have already identified themselves as wanting to volunteer versus putting out a blanket message to everyone."<br><br>"I think the only problem with it is it never stops. So how you deal with, even, and I feel that myself is, it's very, it's oppressive. It's so much. It never stops… And kind of depressed. Burnt out about it. But I think that, I can't imagine what it would be like if we didn't have it. It's extraordinarily powerful tool."<br><br>"there was just a lot of people not taking one more step to find out what the real information was. Even thought it's just go to the next post, or the next post ... And were people maybe engage with us infrequently or only popped in to find out where the march was, and then oh they missed five or six weeks of messages about how we're not marching." |
| Educating on Facebook | Description of one the ways WMMN use Facebook | Creating politically empowered individuals, exposing individuals to different ideas about collective action, teaching them about the political system and who their representatives are. WMMN tracks bills and legislation and keep supporters informed of what's happening in congress. Educating people on the importance of voting. Educating people on pink hats as a symbol of resistance that marginalizes other groups. |

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| | | Teaching people about intersectionality of issues.<br><br>"I think some of it for us was just educating people about the difference between state House and the state Senate and the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. And just having people know who their elected officials are so that way they can follow what their elected officials are doing"<br><br>"Yeah, it's about deepening people's understanding of the issues. And how real people are affected… and this is happening to real people. It's not happening in Washington, it's happening right here where we live"<br><br>"more education we can have to help people know who their representatives are so then that way when we are doing calls to action, they know to call… And then we're always putting the link as well so that way if they don't know who their representatives are that they can find that out because we don't expect everyone to know or remember." |
| Inspirational stories | Descriptions of how organizers try to uplift supporters | Having inspirational and empowering stories to help people fight back against misogyny, and to inspire supporters<br><br>"As far as building community, some of the things that we have focused on is trying to share a shero every week…more of an inspirational rallying point for people to see an awesome woman doing something great"<br><br>"And we also try to include feel good stories as well, like things that are really empowering to women because I know that so much of what's on Facebook is the |

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| | | negative, that we want people to be encouraged by the work that we're doing as well. And so, trying to add some of those things in there as well so people aren't getting burnt out I think is another important thing." |
| Being relevant or personal | Descriptions of how organizers | Creating events and political activities that are relevant to them, events that they can relate to, and in places where they live. Offer multiple types of political action and opportunities for people to get involved by partnering with other organizations. Linking supporters up with other organizations based on their interests/passion.<br><br>"Because Facebook is so immediate, and it's so personal. Because it's talking to you, even though it's not really talking to you"<br><br>"But getting people to show up in a way that's meaningful for them in a way that also challenges them"<br><br>"Well you know we have people from all over the state, you don't have to live in our little tiny town…And then we can connect lots of groups like we can point people at Immigrant Movement for Justice, or we can point people at Planned Parenthood, or one of the Indivisible groups, or Stand up Minnesota... We're not just focused on our own stuff I mean we're not only talking about the one event we do a month, or the two events we do a month. We're talking about the whole spectrum of what's happening in the Twin Cities"<br><br>"but the whole point is with what we're trying to do, we have to make it relevant |

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| | | to Minnesotans, otherwise they're just not going to engage" |
| Partnerships with other organizations | Description of why, what and how organizers do to build alliances and partnerships | Participate in many events by other organizations. Amplifying the work of other organizations by sharing their posts and events, a benefit to other organizations, and following the organizations. Collaborating with other groups to work on similar goals, to be more effective and more efficient, and to provide a wide range of collective action opportunities that supporters can do.<br><br>"following the leaders in the organizations that have been doing this work for decades longer than we have…amplifying their message and what they are fighting for"<br><br>"what we bring is access to a lot of people…because unless their message is getting out, it's hard to make things change"<br><br>"We're involved with this group for a number of different things. That's Indivisible Minnesota Local, Action Together Twin Cities, a number of other Indivisible groups, Watch Your Reps… The idea is that we track it and then we put out calls to action, and then hopefully that then goes out to lots of networks to groups all across the state. And so more and more, we've been working together, and we trust each other's motivation and our writing."<br><br>"We don't necessarily have a huge expertise in all those fronts. So, this coalition is a way of bringing in, of working in an area that we don't necessarily have so much expertise, but this other movement have it…. If we all |

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| | | work together, you suddenly cover so much more areas"<br><br>"And we have developed cultural relationships with lots of organizations in the Twin Cities so one of our goals in this World is to amplify the voices of women from their communities."<br><br>"We do address ... I wish we would do more of connecting with our partners on Facebook and tagging them and tagging back." |
| Building connection with supporters | Description of practices that organizers use to establish trust and connect with supporters; and importance of connection | Consistency in communication style and consistency in beliefs or values. Open communication, transparency, and checking content for accuracy on Facebook. Being present at events that WMMN promotes and promoting events from organizations WMMN trusts. Being reliable and a familiar face and support for inexperienced supporters. Building relationship or community.<br><br>"having those conversations back and forth, like when they had concerns, just responding to them right there why we weren't marching or whatever the case may be. That was a good example of trying to build trust"<br><br>"remain a constant stream of truthful, vetted information is really important to us, that if we're promoting a group that we haven't worked a lot with in the past, that we are making sure that what we're putting out there to our supporters is not fake news and that it's reliable and that we're just being as transparent as possible"<br><br>"And that we're not sending them off to some group that we've never heard of |

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| | | before to do an action or participate in something that might be unsafe or from a base of people that we don't know, or something that we don't trust… A representative from Women's March Minnesota participates in everything that we ask people to go to… we're representing that we make sure that we can participate rather than just "Here's 12 things to show up at." We actually try and find 12 people or more that can go and participate in all of those things. So we put our feet on the ground when we're calling for things to participate"<br><br>"This is what we'd hear is "I don't know that organization I would go and support them but I don't want to go by myself." So that's why it's been important for us to show up. We're there you come find us. We'll be your new friend while you're figuring out how to participate with this new organization… You come with us and participate with us that's in ... If it's a protest or a march that we've done a lot of that. We're going to this we will be here, you can come meet us here."<br><br>"They feel they're not connected to an idea, or they're not connected to a Facebook page, they're connected to the people in the movement. That's what keep people coming back, is building the net relationship"<br><br>"But yeah, absolutely because I think, again, that relationship piece is important and I built some really great relationships because of the Women's March, and that community piece, and so definitely saying, "Come do this with me," or that sort of thing is something that is definitely something to do" |

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| Interacting with supporters | Descriptions of how organizers interact with supporters | Commenting, liking, responding. Replying to private messages and being responsive to any questions. Engaging with supporters to build community. Tagging supporters to invite them to actions.<br><br>"I think as much as we can interact with people, and there are moments when I think we do need to take the conversation to a private setting, but for the most part, if we can address concerns right there, we should"<br><br>"we would take that conversation into a private message or to an email and really have that one on one conversation and helped them, again, feel like they were a part of our community and making sure that they knew that they could volunteer with us and that we valued their voice and want them to be involved"<br><br>"it's about building that community and so engaging with people and commenting on their stuff and acknowledging that they're taking the time to engage with us so we're going to reciprocate, that's really important to me and to our social media team"<br><br>"but I think really what having that response be prompt is showing them that we care about what they're coming to us with, that we're not just this entity that's out here that's greater than the rest of the community by some way, that they are Women's March Minnesota and so your point of view or your question or whatever it is that you're coming to us with, is absolutely important."<br><br>"personal component when someone knows that you're doing it and especially |

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| | | if I tag them and ask them to do it, then there's like that accountability piece."<br><br>"We're really responsive, we get a lot of messages on Facebook, a lot of direct messages. And we respond to all those"<br><br>"But I do comment. There are things I say as me that I don't say as Women's March. Like today, yesterday I posted about caucuses. Giving people information about caucuses, and why it's important to get involved in the, to go to precinct caucuses. And today, I commented as myself saying, here's a great of resolutions you might want to take a look at."<br><br>"They kind of realized, "Yeah, they do need to interact a little bit more." Yeah, I wouldn't say it's been a huge focus, but it's been just one avenue to, especially in the last month [issue with anniversary], address some of the concerns, address why we weren't marching or how people could get involved and that sort of thing."<br><br>"We did around the Anniversary March because we were clearing away misconceptions, so that one we decided to engage 'cause people had wrong information or were really upset. We were trying to really deal with that, but prior to that we don't. If somebody asks a question we'll answer it, but we're not gonna get into some sort of philosophical argument."<br><br>"private messages, yeah. We're 100% in having conversations with those folks 'cause they just they have a concern, or a question, or a want to connect with somebody and we really do a good job of connecting with those folks." |

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| Gaining supporters | Description of ways the organizers use to grow their base | Inviting people who have liked a post to follow or like the Facebook page. Facebook as a first point of contact to become engage with WMMN.<br><br>“I think it's the connection from Facebook to the website. I think that Facebook is a great way to gain followers for sure”<br><br>“Yeah, I think it's just really continuing to connect with those other organizations to keep growing the community base, because you could be interested in something with Planned Parenthood and not really know what Women's March is doing, and then realize, "Oh, they're also doing this here and this here and this here." All of a sudden you're part of our group too, right?”<br><br>"Let's talk to the activists, or let's talk to the people who are already interested," rather than reach out to people who were kind of not interested.”<br><br>“inviting them to the page so then that way hopefully they get more of our notifications so they hopefully will be more connected and engage with us on other posts”<br><br>“I guess the other thing that I can think of is I'm a part of a lot of groups, and so oftentimes especially if it's an event or a post that I think other people would be really interested in or it would grab a lot of people's attention, I'll share that post in all of the other Facebook groups. Like there's a Northeast Minneapolis group that I'm a part of or some of the Indivisible groups, so then that way it's hopefully promoting the Women's March Minnesota name and whatever the post is that we're |

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| | | talking about and then hopefully driving people back to the Facebook page and hopefully resulting in more likes and more engagement."<br><br>"think that event's that we host helping people move along that activism spectrum. Educating people, having people have the opportunity to participate, it levels meaning for them. Those are all community building things." |
| Receiving and spreading information | Description of ways Facebook impacts WMMN | Instantaneous and immediate. Able to respond quickly to actions, faster than other modes of communication. Point of contact for supporters to receive information about events.<br><br>"being able to get information about what's happening and where, who's involved. It's all through social media."<br><br>"The reality is a lot of call to action are, you respond to something very quickly, and needs to get out. And I cant wait for the website in that chopping wood to put content on there."<br><br>"Oh, I didn't know that event was happening until I saw it on your Facebook page"<br><br>"I think so. I mean people just. A lot of people, that's such an important way that they relate to the world, it seems to me… And then amplifying the work of other groups and the issue, other people's issues. And Facebook I think works really well for that. And particularly if you set it up so that people have opportunities to links of deep, more in-depth information."<br><br>"I think the most stuff we get feedback on is letting them know about events. Letting |

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| | | them know what's happening in terms of legislation that they, generally that they can care about. I don't mean we cover all areas very well, well enough. But that's the feedback we get, is that they appreciate us passing on information."<br><br>"It's really us pushing information out, and it's an opportunity for people to message us. We do a lot of sharing on that, so sharing of other groups' events and sharing of other groups' posts and sharing for Women's March Posts. I think that that helps [inaudible 00:08:12] have our pretty broad and pretty spread out community feel connected, like they're up on what's next. But it's also susceptible to the Facebook algorithms." |
| Collective action threshold | Description of limits to collective action | Some people are not comfortable doing certain actions such as blocking traffic. These people are more comfortable participating in less confrontational actions such as calling representatives or sending postcards to representatives. Wide spectrum of comfort level but also wide spectrum of issues supporters are interested in.<br><br>"So, sometimes people are less interested in showing up if it's not permitted, and then it's shutting down traffic, like some people are just not comfortable with that. But we're still going to put that as an event that's out there and that's something that people should be showing up to."<br><br>"... we're across the whole spectrum, we have people that Marshall at events and participate when protests get heated, and taking to the streets, and then we have people that are just comfortable righting post cards and sharing things on Facebook" |

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| | | "We need to get people moving out of their being safe all the time, and not wanting to stick their neck out to talk about DREAMers, and immigrants, and all those things. But it's individual for each person and where their passion lies, and how they think they can get involved and the level of courage and bravery and willingness to go with and it's different for every single person" |
| Toxicity on FB | Description of downside to public posts | People hide behind the cloak of anonymity and are toxic in their comments. Difficult to control the conversation. Combat toxicity by not getting involved (unless necessary – e.g. anniversary).<br><br>"honest on social media with how they feel because they're kind of behind that wall of anonymity 'cause then in person people were far less aggressive to us"<br><br>"That was when I was feeling pretty frustrated with some of the negative comments…But really also then to help people see that there are real people behind the organization"<br><br>"Well anybody and their brother can have a horrible opinion and blast it out to everyone, I mean that's really a downside. That it's a really a place that people can be Facebook activists, right. They don't show up for anything, they don't participate in anything, but they sure have a lot of yelling to do at us… But that's one of the things that happens is you lose control at some point, and it's not Minnesotans, it's not people that we were hoping to reach. It was like Germany, and France, and all over the world. These comments were coming in from everywhere" |

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| | | "I just see things explode so horribly on Facebook that I really avoid. And I think in general, what I understood our policy to be, is when somebody is being really nasty about stuff we posted, we just go silent. And other people will step in and deal with it" |
| Face-to-face meeting | Description of the limits of Facebook as community builder | Meeting face to face is important and can be better than online communication, because of more visual cues to establish a stronger or deeper connection.<br><br>"There was a woman who I worked with for the last six months that I never met face to face until last Sunday. We developed a wonderful relationship, and I've worked in organizations where it's been all virtual, but I think meeting face to face, it helps just create that connection"<br><br>"but you also have to sit down and talk and build proper trust"<br><br>"But really to develop relationships, you're not really deepening your relationships by agreeing with a post on Facebook, right. I'm not getting to know you, and we're not having a conversation. We could see that we agree, and we could see that we might be going to the same event. But really to get people really talking to each other and to build community you need to do that in person." |
| Marching/Rallying | Description of organizers' thoughts on the value and symbol of marching/rallying | Strong symbol of unity and solidarity. Women found their voice through the march. Felt like they have accomplished something by showing up together, felt their voices were heard and felt |

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| | | empowered. Used pink hats as a symbol of the march and resistance.<br><br>“I think that people…were so inspired by seeing all these people come together and it being about women. I think people really clung onto that… I think it was them [White women] feeling like we were taking their voice away… or taking that movement away from them. A march about someone else and not about them was the issue.”<br><br>“I mean, the amount of women who have stepped up to run for office and the amount of women who have said, "I found my voice at the Women's March and now I'm running for state House or school board or Congress,"<br><br>“and people are still proud of their pink hats. And that's what they're yelling at us when we weren't marching is “But I wanna wear my pink hat!” Well that's great, go wear it somewhere, it's not really the value we embrace. It's not really, in Minnesota, it's not the representation of how we look at being a woman.”<br><br>Marching is not enough, need to do more to make changes. Need to do other changes other than marching on a single day.<br><br>“you can see the number, how many of those women actually did something in the last year besides march? How many of them actually picked up the phone to call a representative? I think that's where we get lost, and we have to navigate how to best have that conversation. How do we get people to act, versus just show up on that one day, wear their pink hat, and move on?” |

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| | | "that marching wasn't enough, and I think they were just like, "But I am involved. I marched," but it's like, "Okay, but that's not enough… you got to take it a step further if you really care about it and really want to make change"<br><br>"And we can yell all day long, but if we're not taking concrete steps to take action to make changes, nothing is ever going to be different. And that was really the shift in our focus for the anniversary event, was really focusing on commitment and while another march with even 50,000 people would have amazing… The event needed to be different because this year needs to be different"<br><br>"But then if there's a lot it's heavily white women, and then the community that we really want to amplify is women of color in indigenous communities, and that's really what our event was about. And that community said "Thank you." Like you get it, the march isn't a useful tool, I mean it is and it's not, it's just one strategy and we're trying to take this broader bigger step." |
| Voting | Description of organizers' thoughts on the value and symbol of voting | One of the top priorities for the movement in 2018 is on voting and getting people to vote<br><br>"Vote. Not only vote, but educate, get educated on voting, and start early, caucus. Support a candidate early on, and then stay educated and keep following a candidate. Staying up to date on voting. Exercise that right, because who represents you really does make a difference, even at every level, you know what I mean?" |

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| | | "But we also recognize that just showing up for a march or a rally or a protest in and of itself is not going to create change necessarily. It's then taking that and volunteering on a campaign to help somebody with the same values as you get elected."<br><br>"I think that's totally fair to say [that voting is more important]. In fact, I know that the 2018 election, voting is going to be a priority that we have in our communications plan all year. It's going to start with educating people on why they need to vote"<br><br>"We're going into a really transformative political year for Minnesota. We've got two special elections that are happening on Monday for the representative and the senator that stepped down. We've got two senator races, which is unheard of, because of Al Franken resigning or stepping back…We've got a governor's race. We've got other congressional seats that we need to flip… But there's just so much happening politically and we recognize that that is the vehicle that's going to make the changes that we are really fighting for" |
| Measuring impact | Description of the effectiveness of posts | Difficult to measure success or results from Facebook organizing or communication. Difficult to track how many people read the post or participated because of the post, unlike traditional methods like phone calling or knocking on doors. Look at likes as measure of engagement.<br><br>"one of the things a lot of groups think about is how does one measure the effectiveness of posting calls to action on Facebook. And people have done it |

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| | | different ways. Some people get really anal, and they sort of, at the end of every week, they put up this little thing on Facebook and say, let us know how many times did you call your legislator this week. There's the desperate need to know that there's some point spending hours."<br><br>"One of the things is you don't necessarily know what impact you have. I think you don't know, it's hard to measure. Unless you actively put something like that in place. |
| Easy actions | Description of perceived cost of actions | Actions that supporters can do behind a screen or not have to show up physically is considered an easy action<br><br>"That's so easy, and I think that's the big thing too is showing how easy it is to do these things, that marching is easy. So is voting. Now can you help other people? Can you drive people to the polls who maybe can't get there on their own? That might be one simple action that you can take" |
| Algorithm | Description of the limitations of Facebook for communication and organizing | Messages are not seen or delayed. Conflicts over WMMN anniversary arose because messages were buried. Less reliable than emails for immediate actions.<br><br>"Doesn't mean it's going to go on a newsfeed right away. There's going to be a lag…depending on the engagement, will give it priority or less priority over other posts in a person's Facebook feed."<br><br>"…if I need you to take an action by 5:00 PM tomorrow…Facebook might suppress it or bury it in newsfeeds, and people might not see it" |

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| | | "Like we might put a call to action for this afternoon, and somebody might not get it for three days" |
| Structure of WMMN | | Unpaid volunteers, different people running Facebook, disconnect, national is hands-off. Focused on group consensus without a central leader and to be a grassroots organization.<br><br>"They have all these people, these resources that we simply don't have"<br><br>"We really spent most of last year trying to be a more feminine leadership structure with a leader in every seat without a central ... We made decisions by group consensus. We talked through everything and really tried to just develop everybody's capacity for leadership."<br><br>"We have a small steering committee, and really, what we need is we need to be more grassroots and allow people to take the ideas and participate in ways that the feel good for them and that feeds their passion"<br><br>"But the issue is having enough people so that you have like someone like me who can do the harder research on the calls to action. And then the person who can do the, knows enough to be able to respond in a sort of engaging way. Because I'm not that person. So we need more people. We need to build the team to be able to do that." |

## Appendix B: Online Survey Questions

**Information Sheet for Research** You are invited to be in a research study. We ask that you read this form before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by: Michelle Chen, PhD Candidate (Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication).

**Background Information**
The purpose of this study is to better understand the political behavior of supporters who are on the Women's March Minnesota Facebook Page.

**Procedures**
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes or less. Upon completion of this questionnaire, your email will be entered into a pool where 10 participants will each stand a chance to win a $50 gift card. Winners of the gift card will be contacted via email.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study**
The study has no foreseeable risk. There are no direct benefits to participation.

**Confidentiality**
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Participation will not affect a participant's current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. Participants are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions**
The researcher to contact for this study is Michelle Chen. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at chen1910@umn.edu.

To share feedback privately about your research experience, including any concerns about the study, call the Research Participants Advocate Line: 612-625-1650 or give feedback online at www.irb.umn.edu/report.html. You may also contact the Human Research Protection Program in writing at D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

**Statement of Consent:**

By clicking the "CONSENT" box below you are confirming that you have read the above

information, asked any questions you have and received answers, and that you CONSENT to participant in this study.

- ○ Yes, I CONSENT (1)
- ○ No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Information Sheet for Research You are invited to be in a research study. We ask that you read... = No*

Cost Please indicate the amount of personal cost you associate with doing the following activities:

*For this study, **cost** is defined as **your perceived amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) involved.** In other words, cost is based on how much risk, effort, or financial cost you think is needed for each activity.*

| | Low cost (1) | Moderate cost (2) | High cost (3) |
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| Signing petition(s) (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Calling/writing to representatives (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Donating (e.g. buying merchandise, etc) (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Voting in election(s) (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Event volunteering (e.g. marshaling/sign making/fundraising/ad hoc tasks) (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Marching/rallying/demonstration (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Boycotting (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Intention How likely are you to participate in the following activities in the next 12 months?

| | Extremely Unlikely (1) | Very Unlikely (2) | Somewhat Unlikely (3) | Somewhat Likely (4) | Very Likely (5) | Extremely Likely (6) | Undecided (7) |
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| Signing petition(s) (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Calling/writing to representatives (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Donating (e.g. buying merchadise, etc) (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Voting in election(s) (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Event volunteering (e.g. marshaling/sign making/fundraising/ad hoc tasks) (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Marching/rallying/demonstration (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Boycotting (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Interaction How often do you **interact** with other FB page members' posts, replies, or comments (e.g. comment/reply, like/react)?

*For this study, members are supporters who have 'liked' or 'followed' the Women's March Minnesota FB page.*

- ○ More than a once a day (1)
- ○ About once a day (2)
- ○ About once a week (3)
- ○ About once a month (4)
- ○ About once every 2-3 months (5)
- ○ About once every 6 months (6)
- ○ Never (7)

Reciprocity How often do other members **interact** with your posts, replies, or comments (e.g. comment/reply, like/react) in the FB page?

*For this study, members are supporters who have 'liked' or 'followed' the Women's March Minnesota FB page.*

- ○ More than once a day (1)
- ○ About once a day (2)
- ○ About once a week (3)
- ○ About once a month (4)
- ○ About once every 2-3 months (5)
- ○ About once every 6 months (6)
- ○ Never (7)

Interaction How often do you **read** posts, replies, or comments made by other members in the FB page?

*For this study, members are supporters who have 'liked' or 'followed' the Women's March Minnesota FB page.*

- ○ More than once a day (1)
- ○ About once a day (2)
- ○ About once a week (3)
- ○ About once a month (4)
- ○ About once every 2-3 months (5)
- ○ About once every 6 months (6)
- ○ Never (7)

Intimacy
In general, how **close** (e.g. affection, attachment, bond) do you feel towards members of the WomensMarchMN FB page?

*For this study, members are supporters who have 'liked' or 'followed' the Women's March Minnesota FB page.*

- ○ Extremely close (1)
- ○ Very close (2)
- ○ Somewhat close (3)
- ○ Not too close (4)
- ○ Not at all close (5)

Trust In general, how often can you **trust** members of the WomensMarchMN FB page?

*For this study, members are supporters who have 'liked' or 'followed' the Women's March Minnesota FB page.*

- ○ Always (1)
- ○ Most of the time (2)
- ○ About half of the time (3)
- ○ Some of the time (4)
- ○ Never (5)

Duration-Read When you are on FB, how much time do you typically spend **reading** posts, comments, or (private) messages made **by the administrator** of WomensMarchMN FB page?

*Administrator posts and writes comments under the profile name "Women's March Minnesota"*

- ○ No time at all (1)
- ○ 1 to 2 minutes (2)
- ○ 2 to 5 minutes (3)
- ○ 5 to 10 minutes (4)
- ○ 10 to 15 minutes (5)
- ○ 15 to 30 minutes (6)
- ○ More than 30 minutes (7)

Attent This is an attention check question. Please select "yes" for this question

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Duration-Interact When you are on FB, how much time do you typically spend **interacting** (e.g. like/react, comment/reply, share) with posts, comments, or (private) messages made **by the administrator** of WomensMarchMN FB page?

*Administrator posts content and writes comments under the profile name "Women's March Minnesota".*

- ○ No time at all (1)
- ○ 1 to 2 minutes (2)
- ○ 2 to 5 minutes (3)
- ○ 5 to 10 minutes (4)
- ○ 10 to 15 minutes (5)
- ○ 15 to 30 minutes (6)
- ○ More than 30 minutes (7)

Intensity In general, which one of the following best describes your participation in the WomensMarchMN FB page? (Did not use this question in analysis).

- ○ I rarely visit the Women's March MN FB page (e.g. profile/home page) (1)
- ○ I read wall posts/discussion (2)
- ○ I mostly read, sometimes write/reply/comment to wall posts (3)
- ○ I read, and write/reply/comment to wall posts (4)
- ○ I read, write, and start new posts/discussion to the page (5)

Duration-FB On average, how much time do you spend on Facebook per day? (Did not use this question in analysis).

- ○ No time at all (1)
- ○ Less than 10 mins (2)
- ○ 10 to 30 mins (3)
- ○ More than 30 mins, up to 1 hour (4)
- ○ More than 1 hour, up to 2 hours (5)
- ○ More than 2 hours, up to 3 hours (6)
- ○ More than 3 hours (7)

Int - low cost How likely would you participate in future **low-cost activities** organized by WomensMarchMN if you were invited by the following groups of people:

*For this study, future low-cost activities refer to any activity that you think has a low amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

*For this study, an organizer is someone who is/was involved in the planning or coordinating of Women's March Minnesota's events and activities.* (Did not use this question in analysis).

| | Extremely Unlikely (1) | Very Unlikely (2) | Somewhat Unlikely (3) | Somewhat Likely (4) | Very Likely (5) | Extremely Likely (6) | Undecided (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FB page members you do not know in real life (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| WomensMarch MN organizers you do not know in real life (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| FB page members you know in real life (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| WomensMarch MN organizers you know in real life (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Int - high cost
How likely would you participate in future **high-cost activities** organized by WomensMarchMN if you were invited by the following groups of people:

*For this study, future high-cost activities refer to any activity that you think has a high amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

*For this study, an organizer is someone who is/was involved in the planning or coordinating of Women's March Minnesota's events and activities.* (Did not use this question in analysis).

| | Extremely Unlikely (1) | Very Unlikely (2) | Somewhat Unlikely (3) | Somewhat Likely (4) | Very Likely (5) | Extremely Likely (6) | Undecided (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FB page members you do not know in real life (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| WomensMarch MN organizers you do not know in real life (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| FB page members you know in real life (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| WomensMarch MN organizers you know in real life (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Cont-tie strength Are the following groups of people members of the WomensMarchMN FB page? (Did not use this question in analysis).

| | Yes (1) | No (2) | Unsure (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Family members (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Close friends (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Friends (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Colleagues or classmates (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Acquaintances (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Attention Check: Please select "Yes" (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Vis_low-public

**Please read**: Take a second to imagine that your acts of activism on Facebook are visible to all members of the FB page. Examples of acts of activism include donations, becoming a member, volunteering, protesting, attending court sessions, signing petitions, calling representatives. For this study, activism does not include sharing or liking/reacting to FB posts.

How likely will you participate in a **low-cost activity** if the activity is **made public** to other members of the FB page by WomensMarchMN organizers?

*Low-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a low amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Vis-low-private
How likely will you participate in a **low-cost activity** if the activity is **kept hidden/private** to members of the FB page by WomensMarchMN organizers?

*Low-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a low amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Vis-high-public

**Please read**: Take a second to imagine that your acts of activism on Facebook are visible to all members of the FB page. Examples of acts of activism include donations, becoming a member, volunteering, protesting, attending court sessions, signing petitions, calling representatives. For this study, activism does not include sharing or liking/reacting to FB posts.

How likely will you participate in a **high-cost activity** if the activity is **made public** to members of the FB page by WomensMarchMN organizers?

*High-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a high amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Vis-high-private
How likely will you participate in a **high-cost activity** if the activity is **hidden/private** to members of the FB page by WomensMarchMN organizers?

*High-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a high amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed for the activity.*

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Perception
Imagine that Women's March Minnesota organizers mentioned/tagged or posted pictures of you participating in WomensMarchMN activities (e.g. donating, volunteering, protesting, signing petitions, calling representatives, etc) on the Women's March Minnesota Facebook page. How likely do you think other members on the

WomensMarchMN FB page will see your acts of activism? (Did not use this question in analysis).

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Inj norm How much do you think people important to you on Facebook (e.g. your social network) would approve or disapprove of your participation in **low-cost activities**?

*Low-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a low amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed to complete the activity.*

- ○ Strongly approve (1)
- ○ Approve (2)
- ○ Somewhat approve (3)
- ○ Neither approve nor disapprove (4)
- ○ Somewhat disapprove (5)
- ○ Disapprove (6)
- ○ Strongly disapprove (7)

This is an attention check question. Please select "yes" for this question

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Inj norm How much do you think people important to you on Facebook (e.g. your social network) would approve or disapprove of your participation in **high-cost activities**?

*High-cost activity is any activity that you perceive as having a high amount of risk, effort, time, or financial cost (if applicable) needed to complete the activity.*

- ○ Strongly approve (1)
- ○ Approve (2)
- ○ Somewhat approve (3)
- ○ Neither approve nor disapprove (4)
- ○ Somewhat disapprove (5)
- ○ Disapprove (6)
- ○ Strongly disapprove (7)

Perct - social netwk How likely do you think your friends and family on Facebook will see your actions (e.g. donating, volunteering, protesting, signing petitions, calling representatives, etc) if they were made public by Women's March MN organizers? (Did not use this question in analysis):

- ○ Very likely (1)
- ○ Likely (2)
- ○ Somewhat likely (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat unlikely (5)
- ○ Unlikely (6)
- ○ Very unlikely (7)

Political Efficacy How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree (1) | Somewhat agree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat disagree (4) | Strongly disagree (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Public officials don't care much what people like me think (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People like me don't have any say about what the government does (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Indi efficacy How much do you agree or disagree that you can *personally* have an impact on political outcomes if you participated in the following activities (Did not use this question in analysis):

| | Strongly agree (1) | Somewhat agree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat disagree (4) | Strongly disagree (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Signing petition(s) (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Calling/writing to representatives (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Donating (e.g. buying merchandise, etc) (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Voting in election(s) (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Event volunteering (e.g. marshaling/sign making/fundraising/ad hoc tasks (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Marching/rallying/demonstration (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Boycotting (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Grp efficacy How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements (Did not use this question in analysis):

| | Strongly agree (1) | Somewhat agree (3) | Neither agree nor disagree (4) | Somewhat disagree (5) | Strongly disagree (8) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The actions of WomensMarchMN have a huge influence on public policies or public affairs (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The actions of WomensmarchMN can improve society (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The actions of WomensMarchMN make it easier to achieve desired political or policy outcome compared to individual actions (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| If enough people joined the Women's March movement and demanded change, politicians would take steps to end their problems (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Pol/Grp Identity How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I identify with other people who support gender-related causes. (Did not use this question in analysis)

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Somewhat agree (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (5)
- ○ Disagree (6)
- ○ Strongly disagree (7)

Pol/Grp Identity How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I identify with the Women's March movement. (Did not use this question in analysis)

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Somewhat agree (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (5)
- ○ Disagree (6)
- ○ Strongly disagree (7)

Political Identity_1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Being involved in the women's movement is important to me. (Did not use this question in analysis)

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Somewhat agree (3)
- ○ Undecided (4)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (5)
- ○ Disagree (6)
- ○ Strongly disagree (7)

Gen pol activity Did you engage in any of the following activities in the past 12 months:

| | Yes (1) | No (2) |
|---|---|---|
| Attended a public hearing, town hall meeting, or city council meeting (1) | ○ | ○ |
| Called or wrote a letter to an elected public official/representative (2) | ○ | ○ |
| Posted a political sign, banner, button or bumper sticker (3) | ○ | ○ |
| Participated in demonstrations, protests, rallies, or marches (4) | ○ | ○ |
| Signed a petition about a political or social issue (5) | ○ | ○ |
| Donated money to any organization concerned with a political or social issue (6) | ○ | ○ |
| Participated in or volunteer for groups that took actions for social or political reform or issues (7) | ○ | ○ |
| Voted in political election(s) (8) | ○ | ○ |
| If you selected 'yes' to any of political activities above, were the activities promoted or organized by WomenMarch MN? (9) | ○ | ○ |

Belonging How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree or disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I seldom worry about whether other people care about me (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I want other people to accept me (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not like being alone (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have a strong “need to belong.” (8) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans (9) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me (10) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

age What is your age?

_____

Edu What is your highest level of education?

- ○ Less than high school degree (1)
- ○ High school degree of equivalent (e.g. GED) (2)
- ○ Some college but no degree (3)
- ○ Associate degree (4)
- ○ Bachelor degree (5)
- ○ Graduate degree (6)

Geog What geographical region best describes where you currently live?

- ○ Twin Cities (1)
- ○ Suburbs (2)
- ○ Greater Minnesota (3)

Paff Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- ○ Extremely conservative (1)
- ○ Conservative (2)
- ○ Slightly conservative (3)
- ○ Moderate; middle of the road (4)
- ○ Slightly liberal (5)
- ○ Liberal (6)
- ○ Extremely liberal (7)
- ○ Undecided/Unsure (8)

Race Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?

- ○ No (1)
- ○ Yes (2)

Ethnicity Below is a list of 5 race categories. Please choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be [Check all that apply]:

- ☐ White/Caucasian (1)
- ☐ Black/African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Other (6)

Ethnicity_Other If other, please specify

_____

Income The next question is about the total income of YOUR HOUSEHOLD for the PAST 12 MONTHS. Please include your income PLUS the income of all members living in your household (including cohabiting partners and armed forces members living at home).

Please count income BEFORE TAXES, including income from all sources (such as wages, salaries, tips, net income from a business, interest, dividends, child support, alimony, and Social Security, public assistance, pensions, or retirement benefits).

▼ Under $5,000 (1) ... $250,000 or more (29)

comm Please use this space to provide any clarifications or comments about the study.

_____

_____

Email
**Your email will NOT be in any way associated with the data collected.**

Please enter your email address in the Google Form and click "submit".
Then please read the Debriefing of the study below the form.

**Debriefing**
Thank you for participating in our study! The study you just took part in helps me better understand strategies for mobilizing supporters for collective action.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact Michelle Chen at chen1910@umn.edu. If you are interested in learning how the study turned out, please send an email to chen1910@umn.edu, and I will gladly send you the results of the study when it is finished.

As compensation for participating in our study, you will stand a chance to win a $50 gift

card.

Thanks again for participating!