PROTESTING TRUMP[*]

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This article charts the emergence of protest in the wake of the 2016 presidential election describing trends in protest activity from the first to second Women's Marches. We document characteristics including the magnitude, issue diversity, geographic range, tactical repertoire, and persistence of street protest, and we highlight key similarities and differences between this wave of protest and other recent episodes in the U.S. We conclude by pointing to important empirical and theoretical questions that movement scholars should address through analysis of this case.

This special issue of *Mobilization* details multiple dimensions of contemporary protest and activism, which is marked by the rise of right-wing nationalist movements and politicians and a broad-based, mobilized resistance. In this brief introduction, we chart the remarkable upsurge in street protests in the United States since the election of Donald Trump in 2016. In doing so, we provide important context for the articles that follow, and we identify important questions to frame the research to come on protest since the 2016 election.

How does the recent protest wave compare to others in modern U.S. history? In 1963, the *New York Times* reported that more than 570,000 people protested for African American Civil rights in almost 400 events. In 1968, 750,000 people marched against the war in Vietnam. In 1982, a series of large events brought over 1.1 million people together in favor of nuclear disarmament (McAdam, McCarthy, Olzak and Soule 2009). All of these events combined were dwarfed by the 2017 Women's March and sister events when more than four million people rallied in over 600 locations (Chenoweth and Pressman 2017). In the subsequent year, more than two million people attended over 6,500 protest events in what might be the most remarkable 365 days of protest in US history.

In this report, we highlight the most essential characteristics of protest during the first year of the Trump presidency. First, the magnitude of protest is striking both in terms of the size of the events and the number of events. Second, we trace the diversity of issues which brought people to the streets. Third, we note the geographic dispersion, of protest with events occurring in all fifty states and well beyond conventional sites of protest. Fourth, we emphasize the sustained nature of protests, with wave after wave of events and issues. Finally, we chart the tactical profile of recent protest emphasizing what Lofland (1993) described as "polite protest", with minimal reliance on disruptive tactics or associated conflicts with authorities.

Protest Event Data

We use protest event data to estimate the count and size of protest against the Trump administration and its policies between January 20th, 2017 and January 19th, 2018. Our event data is primarily based on the Crowd Counting Consortium's (CCC) monthly crowd data (https://sites.google.com/view/crowdcountingconsortium). Spearheaded by Erica Chenoweth and Jeremy Pressman, the consortium collects, "publicly available data on political crowds reported in the United States, including marches, protests, strikes, demonstrations, riots, and other actions" (CCC

n.d.). The data are produced through volunteer research assistants who review the results of a news crawl combined with user-submitted reports. The full dataset for each month is made available on the CCC website. While the CCC includes all political crowds, we restrict our analysis to events that oppose President Trump or his policies. We exclude a number of local events and pro-Trump events. Additionally, we eliminate the large number of LGBT pride parades that occurred in late March, as those annual events vary substantially in their political emphasis (McFarland Bruce 2016).

To fill in a temporal gap between January 21st and January 31st where CCC did not track events, we supplement this data with information from Count Love (https://countlove.org), a project led Tommy Leung and Nathan Perkins. Similar to CCC, Count Love data are based on a news crawl with additional human and machine learning coding (Leung and Perkins 2017).

CCC and Count Love datasets produce conservative estimates of crowd sizes by averaging multiple reports, discounting self-reports, and converting verbal descriptions of crowds to lowest plausible integers (e.g., "hundreds" is translated to 200). For 26% of events (n = 1,704), we were not able to establish reliable crowd estimates primarily because they were not reported in the source. In these cases, we imputed a size of eleven, based on our understanding that these events often appeared to be small based on the tone of the article. Combined, we estimate that there were 1,962,457 protest participants.

Our team of research assistants reviewed each CCC and Count Love event. We coded each event on a variety of additional measures, including the topic and issue of the event, whether or not protest was part of a national wave of protests, among others. For example, we estimate that there were 310 protests against President Trump's proposed travel ban, part of 942 protests around a broader issue of immigration. Our coding of issues covers eleven major categories and over two dozen sub-categories. The major issues are: *race* (e.g., Charlottesville), *immigration* (e.g., Day Without Immigrants, Travel Ban, DACA), *healthcare* (e.g. repeal of Obamacare), *economy (*e.g., cuts to social services, tax plan), *gender and sexuality* (e.g., abortion, LGBT rights), *environment* (e.g., climate change), *Trump* (e.g., Russia, personal taxes), *science*, *politics* (e.g., corruption), *education*, and *gun control*. We combine smaller issues into an *"other"* category. Admittedly, there is some overlap between these categories, and some events focus on multiple issues. Here, we have focused on the primary issues based on our coding of the event as described in media reports.

We refer to a specific number of events occurring or so many thousands of people attending issue-specific protests. In all cases, the numbers are based on the dataset, which likely misses some events and has some inaccuracies in size. We understand that our numbers have these, and other sources of errors, but we avoid "approximately" or its synonyms with each estimate in the interest of clearly presenting our results. But each time we report a statistic, feel free to add "approximately" or "about."

Magnitude

Between January 20, 2017 and January 19, 2018, we estimate that attendance totaled 1,981,372 across 6,434 Resistance events. These post-Women's Day marches included approximately 27 events with attendance of more than 10,000 (.4%); 326 events with participation between 1,000 and 10,000 (5%); 1,764 events with between 100 and 1,000 attendees (27%); and 2,613 events with fewer than 100 people (41%); and 1,704 events where the media accounts did not report attendance estimates (26%).

In comparison to other recent protest waves, the anti-Trump protests are striking in their scale. The 2006 immigration protests in response to Sensenbrenner Bill (HR 4437) are the only events that come close in terms of the number of people mobilized, although these events were less sustained (Bada et al. 2006, Voss and Bloemraad 2011, Zepeda-Millán 2017). The 15 2003 during the buildup for the invasion of Iraq are often described as the largest single day of protest in history with an estimated 10 to 15 million participants (Wouters and Ruchy 2010). However, most of the participation was based in Europe with smaller demonstrations in the U.S. Other

prominent movements such as the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter have mobilized much smaller protest events (Madestam et al. 2013, McVeigh et al. 2014, Rogers 2011, Vasi et al. 2016, Williamson et al. 2018). The scale of recent protest reflects multiple factors including the increasing organizational and technological capacity to organize large, coordinated protest events and threats posed by the Trump administration and the Republican Congress to various constituencies and their values.

Issue Diversity

The recent anti-Trump protest is noteworthy in targeting an incredible array of issues. This diversity is reflected as well in the motivations of participants as documented by surveys at major protest events (Fisher et al. 2017, Heaney 2017). As shown in table 1, the first year of Resistance protests included eleven distinct topics which each had more than 100 events. In terms of distinct events, protests concerning race and immigration were the most prominent themes, with health care a distant third. In terms of participation, the largest issue was science, with the massive crowds organized primarily in the March for Science that occurred in April 2017. These events also had the largest median event size. In comparison, the more than six hundred healthcare related protest events were much smaller, with a median event size of just 14.

Table 1. Protest Events and Attendance for Most Common Topics.

Topic	Events	Median Size	Total Attendance
Race	1,279	37	289,072
Immigration	1,131	60	326,665
Healthcare	661	14	41,644
Economy/Spending	644	18	47,040
Gender/sexuality	471	34	110,679
Environment	447	24	275,962
Trump	440	32	100,706
Science	394	200	540,683
Politics	354	50	144,198
Education	139	45	22,622
Gun Control	105	18	6,699

Table 2 looks at the specific issues that brought out the highest number of people. Second behind the well-planned science marches was the more spontaneous airport-focused events in early 2017 to protests President Trump's travel ban (Zepeda-Millán and Wallace 2018). The third largest issue, protests against racism and the alt-right and in opposition to Confederate statutes, occurred in a reactive style like the airport demonstrations. In this case, the precip-itating event was a white nationalist protest where an antiracist activist was killed (Fausset and Feuer 2017).

This recent wave of protest stands out as well on issue diversity with prior waves being defined more clearly by a specific movement and its demands. The main exception is the Tea Party that advanced a variety of claims (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Most prominently Tea Party activists and groups pressed for "shrinking" government and slashing taxes. However, the movement embraced many other cultural issues of central concern to social conservatives.

Geographic Range

Protest events occurred in every U.S. state and were recorded in 848 different counties. While the most events occurred in populous blue states, such as California (n = 690) and New York (n = 497), large battleground states like Florida (n = 295) and red states like Texas (n = 280) also

Table 2. Protest Events and Attendance by Topic Listed in Order of Participation.

Issue	Events	Median Size	Total Attendance
March for Science	392	200	540,683
Travel ban	323	200	235,792
Charlottesville- Unite the Right	275	71	93,312
May Day	64	180	47,861
Trump Tax Returns	114	25	47,297
Planned Parenthood	88	100	37,340
Day without Immigrants	87	50	30,585
DACA	190	22	29,863
Obamacare	450	11	25,016
March for Truth (Trump/Russia)	152	55	18,827

hosted multiple protests. The fewest events were recorded amongst the smallest states in terms of population, including in Hawaii (n = 6), North Dakota (n = 14), and three states with twenty-two events (Delaware, New Hampshire, South Dakota). Of the 135 counties with more than 500,000 residents, 127 had protest events.

On this dimension too, recent protests are noteworthy. The Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter protests have been documented in over 200 cities, and the 2006 immigration protests were limited to an estimated 160 cities McVeigh et al. 2014, Rogers 2011, Vasi et al. 2016, Williamson et al. 2018). The closest parallel, again, is with the Tea Party with protests held in over 500 counties in April 2009 (Madestam et al. 2013). Given the focus on electoral politics for anti-Trump groups and activists, the ability to mobilize in many parts of the country and beyond major metropolitan areas is essential.

Figure 1. Count of protest events by US county.

10+   4-9   1-3   No protests
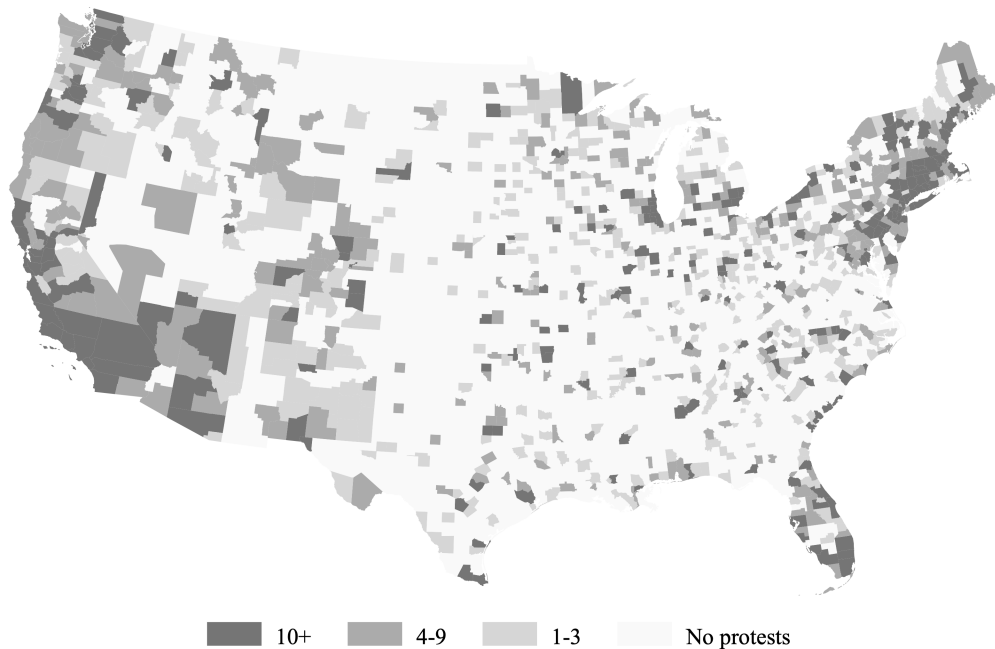
Tactical Repertoire

By far, the most common tactic was the rally or demonstration which was a part of 83.8% of events. Other tactics, such as blockades, vigils, strikes, occupation and were present in no more than 3% of events, as detailed in table 3.

Table 3. Number and Percent of Events by Type plus Corresponding Arrests and Percent.

| Tactic	Events	Percent	Arrests	Arrest Percent
Rally/demonstration	5392	83.8%	228	4.2%
Blockade/slowdown	147	2.3%	16	10.9%
Vigil	132	2.1%	1	0.8%
Strike/walkout/lockout	44	0.7%	0	0.0%
Occupation/sit-in	28	0.4%	15	53.6%
Meeting/Disruption	21	0.3%	0	0.0%
Other	560	8.7%	13	2.3%
Total	6434		259	4.0%

Note: Events may include multiple tactics.

Persistence

As shown in figure 2, the number of monthly protest events never went below 200 during the first year of the Trump presidency. The peak month for events was April with 822 protests. January 2017 had the least number of events with 205, but that is a partial month, including only those ten days after Trump was inaugurated and excluding the Women's Marches. Except for these two months, the range of protests events per month is quite constrained, from 338 events in October 2017 to 652 to in February of that year.

While the number of events was relatively stable, attendance varied more substantially as shown in figure 3 on the next page. Three months (November 2017, January 2018 and October 2017) saw fewer than 50,000 protesters. In contrast, the protest focused on immigration, abortion and other issues brought 286,187 people to the streets in February 2017 while the March for Science, the People's Climate March, and other April events resulted in 869,318 protesters.

Figure 2. Monthly Count of Protest Events, January 2017 to January 2018, Excluding Women's Marches.
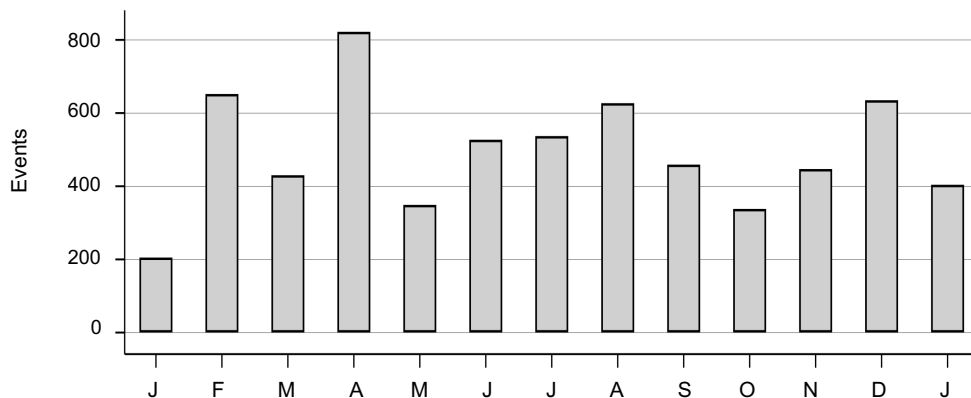
Figure 3. Monthly Count of Protest Attendance, January 2017 to January 2018, Excluding Women's Marches.
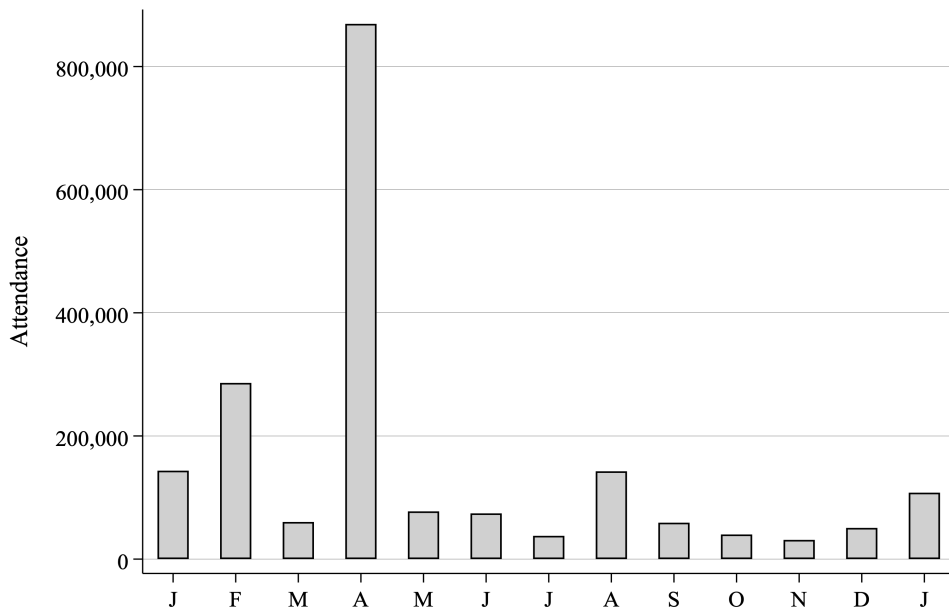
In terms of sustained protest activity, the first year of Trump's presidency and, for that matter, the period since has had remarkably high levels of ongoing demonstrations.

Finally, it is important to note that the patterns we've discussed so far focus on the events between the first and second Women's Marches. Figure 4 shows that participation looks entirely different when we add the turnout from these events to our picture. The large, extensive protests between the two Januarys are barely visible in comparison to the massive first and second Women's Marches.

Figure 4. Monthly Count of Protest Attendance, January 2017 to January 2018.
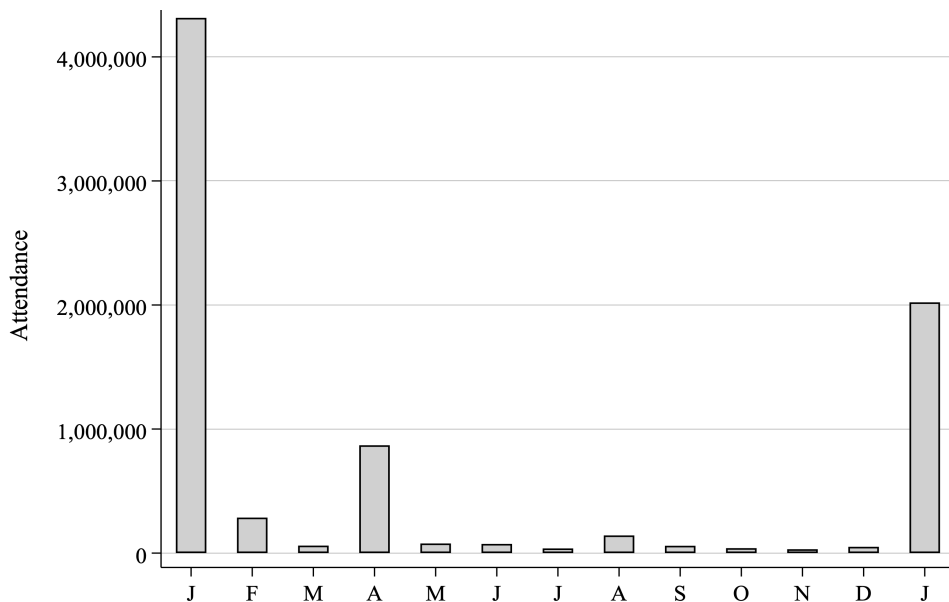
Conclusion

As we have documented, protest during the first year of the Trump presidency was historic on multiple measures. Protests were large and frequent and occurred in a variety of locations. While participation clustered in several large, coordinated events, thousands of other events drew tens of thousands to the streets month after month. Despite a wide variety of topics and issues, the overwhelming majority of events were marches or rallies that occurred without arrests.

The scale and potential significance of this protest wave raise many important empirical questions about this movement and theoretical questions about broader social movement processes. First, what kinds of coalitions are being built, and how have activists engaged in the cultural work of knitting together a multi-issue movement of diverse constituencies? Second, how does the mobilization process vary across different types of protest events, from those that are national and highly coordinated to those that are local and more spontaneous? Third, we need to understand the links between organizations and protest including ties to established civic and community groups, national advocacy organizations and funders, and the formation of new groups and leaders that are less easily documented (Brooker 2018, Putnam and Skocpol 2018). Finally, scholars, activists, and many others will be eager to gauge the influence of recent protest activism beyond the movement sector on political parties, electoral participation, public opinion, the news media and among possible counter movements. The articles in this special issue begin a conversation about this movement.

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