THE RISE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN OKLAHOMA

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This paper provides evidence for the rise of the women's movement in Oklahoma. The women's movement has been slow to emerge in Oklahoma, exemplified early on, and for many decades, by singular women rising to prominence in leadership roles, making slow progress in women's rights and representation against traditionalists in the legislature and local governments. We show that a movement per se has solidified and strengthened in the state since the 2016 election. Since the 1964 landslide election of Lyndon Johnson, Oklahoma has existed as a profoundly Republican state. A majority of the population still adheres to traditional roles and family structures and upholds a conservative ideology. However, in the 2016 election, women stood for elected offices across Oklahoma in unprecedented numbers and participated in the Women's Marches and Teacher's Marches in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. We use social media "followers" and "likes," and attendance at marches as measures of "joining" in political activities as a movement, reinforced by the development of new nonprofits focused on facets of women's empowerment.

"Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul." ("King, Coretta Scott - National Women's Hall of Fame")

The women's movement has been slow to emerge in Oklahoma, exemplified early on, and for many decades, by singular women rising to prominence in leadership roles, making slow progress in women's rights and representation against "traditionalists" in the legislature and local governments. Oklahoma has existed as a profoundly Republican state since after the election of 1948 (except for the 1964 landslide election of Lyndon Johnson), where a majority of the population adheres to traditional roles and family structures and upholds a conservative ideology. Seventy-seven women have been elected to the Oklahoma legislature, and one woman, Mary Fallin, served two terms as governor. Wilma Mankiller was the first woman Principal Chief of the Cherokee, and Kay Rhoades was elected Principal Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation. Willa Johnson was the first African American woman elected to the Oklahoma City Council, serving for fourteen years (Douglas, 2018). While many other Oklahoma women have made significant political contributions, we contend that a *movement* per se has only appeared in the state since 2016. In the 2016 election, women in unprecedented numbers stood for offices across Oklahoma and participated in the Women's March and the Teacher's March. Essential to understanding how and why the increase in women's political participation has contributed to the rise of a women's movement in the state is understanding the incentives underlying the rise of the women's movement in Oklahoma and what has sustained the movement.

In the first section, we review social movement theory and its contribution to explaining the rise of the women's movement in Oklahoma. The second section examines the breadth and depth of Oklahoma's women's groups and their political activism. The third section explains what motivates their participation and the groups' goals, political activities within the groups, and expectations of outcomes. Finally, we bring together the patterns exhibited by the women's movement in Oklahoma since 2016.

A gender gap exists between men and women in political social-

ization, political knowledge and interest, political efficacy, and ambition. Young men and women are taught different messages about political participation as they mature, and variances are found within race and socio-economic status as well. Women generally exhibit less political knowledge and internal political efficacy than men. The gap is even wider among people of color, particularly African-American women (Heldman, 2018). In many cases, the lives of women of color are shoved into the background in favor of men.

In the case of the three women who started the Black Lives Matter movement, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi were shoved to the background by men and ignored. As a result, "#SayHerName" became a rallying symbol in social media, highlighting gender violence, along with #MeToo and "#Timesup," highlighting sexual harassment and sexual assault, respectively (Han & Heldman, 2018).

Examining the determinants and success of women's movements in general (Akchurin, 2013), (Costain, 1992), (Soule, McAdam, McCarthy, & Su, 1999) and (Vitema, 2008) are scholars focused primarily on the experiences of Western European and North American women. Critical elements of women's mobilization are typically issue-specific: physical security issues such as rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, and discrimination in workplaces, schools, and politics. The growth of the women's movement in Oklahoma is related to the interdependence and overlapping goals of individual women's groups in the state. Murdie and Peksen (2015) analyze women's participation in non-gender-specific events such as war and corruption, where women are primary mobilizers.

THEORY

Social movement theory states that groups of people engage in collective action to achieve one or more goals that are specific

in nature and broad in reach. Social movements arise for several reasons: in response to a grievance or injustice committed against a member of a particular identity or group; responding to a perceived need to extend rights to a minority group; in response to a perceived need to raise some issue or set of issues into the public consciousness; all of which seek some policy change or remedy.

A social movement may comprise multiple groups focusing on various issues from different perspectives and specific issues within the movement, such as reproductive rights and access to health care, equity in education, equitable representation in government, and even immigration issues. We define "The Women's Movement" as a broadly arrayed set of groups, each focusing on a specific women's issue that contributes to the greater good of the community. The set of ongoing issues and their advocates comprise elements of the whole, and intergroup relations create a sustainable environment for the entire movement. A few of the groups that comprise the Women's Movement in Oklahoma include supporters of Planned Parenthood, the American Association of University Women, Women March Oklahoma Chapter, Tulsa Women's March, Women Lead Oklahoma, Lawyer Moms of America Oklahoma Chapter, and MMIW, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women." This division of the scope of the work within the movement supports efficiencies related to achieving desired outcomes.

The central theoretical approaches explaining why women protest include relative deprivation, resource mobilization, political processes, and feminism, which underlie protest movements. When minority groups are denied access to resources, protests and domestic terrorism may arise (Piazza, 2011). Ethnic groups excluded from politics will likely rebel in response to oppression (Wimmer, 2009). Collective action is less costly when groups have access to significant resources, including financial support and organizational resources, such as communication via cell phones (McCarthy, 1977), (Murdie & Bhasin, Aiding and Abetting: Human

Rights, NGOs, and Domestic Protest, 2011) thus, the likelihood of protest increases (Bell et al., 2013), (Tilly, 1978), (Jenkins, 1983). Soule and others find that U.S. women are as likely to mobilize within political channels as outside (Soule et al., 1999). Women's organizations have been successful at getting women's issues onto the floor of the U.S. Congress. Murdie and Peksen constructed a global database capturing all non-violent protests by women between 1991 and 2009, finding that women experiencing relative deprivation acted on their grievances when their expectations did not match actual socio-economic and political conditions (Murdie & Peksen, 2015).

The socio-economic status of women organizers also matters. Scholars demonstrate that more highly educated women with access to significant resources can mobilize more effectively than those with lower education and less resource access (Moghadam, 1999), (Ray & Korteweg, 1999). Educated women have the knowledge and tools to engage in collective action. Costain contends that a favorable political atmosphere for success must exist for women to participate in dissent. The organizers must be confident that collective action will yield results and that the government will tolerate protests (Costain, 1992). However, in the second decade of the 21st Century, women in poor sections of cities and states are organizing themselves through social media, and African American women turned out to demonstrate.

Since the inauguration of President Donald Trump in January 2017, the political atmosphere in Oklahoma has been changing. Oklahoma's women, together with women across the country, engaged in collective action to protest the election, promote issues important to women's lives, engage with Oklahoma's government in support of education, and improve the safety and appropriate treatment of undocumented immigrant families, among other issues. The commonality of purpose and the broad scope of women's organizations and engagement comprise the women's movement in Oklahoma and nationwide.

Reactions to anti-feminism are an incentive to engage in non-violent protest and political activism. Anti-feminist discourse has been present in Western culture for decades and it gathered momentum in the 1980s as Ronald Reagan's right-wing politics found its imagined reflection in popular action blockbusters in which toned, white male figures dominated the screen. They were applauded for their physical strength and unapologetic confidence. Although a significant shift in gender politics has occurred since Reagan's tenure, the cultural myth of the 1980s action hero proves hard to extinguish. Some of Donald Trump's sexist discourse resonated with a similar admiration for the macho white man. Male heroes are tied to the rise of white masculine identity and its direct impact on social and cultural hierarchies, including in gendered debates. Whether intentional or not, when Hollywood uses the narrative of the powerful white male, it reinforces collective anxieties surrounding feminist criticism (Misiak, 2018), (Kumarini & Mendes, 2015). Kumarini and Mendes (2015) identify negative responses to feminism as patriarchal attempts at erasing women's rights activism from the public discourse. Misiak states that "If unaddressed, those blatant "feminist erasures" could carry an upsetting potential to halt women's continuing struggle for equality" (Misiak, 2018)

The reaction from feminists, both female and male, is promoted in writing and through open acts of social resistance to gender discrimination. Organizations promoted women to run for office regardless of political party. Those efforts led to more women being elected since 2016 to the U.S. Congress and state legislatures than in the past. In Hollywood, filmmakers began crafting movies with women in the leading roles.

"There is a strong belief in Oklahoma that if you work hard, play by the rules, and take care of your neighbors, the state and its people will flourish. Progress is visible in Oklahoma when:

- Regular citizens and professionals collaborate on best practices and policies.

- Businesses, nonprofits, and individuals encourage lawmakers to vote against hateful and discriminatory legislation, protecting Oklahoma's economy and people.
- Oklahomans can access comprehensive services for themselves and their communities, whether healthcare or education" (Sally's List, 2020)

Oklahoma City and Tulsa are thriving examples of municipalities investing in the futures of their residents. Through initiatives spurred by local action, Oklahoma's two largest cities are reviving communities, providing jobs, and spurring growth.

Two issues on women's front burners are quality education and access to health care. A robust and well-funded public education system is critical to Oklahoma's future, and women believe that state leaders have an obligation to guarantee parents that public schools will be able to prepare their children for prosperity. A strong public education system drives a robust economy, a healthier workforce, and a stronger future for all Oklahomans. Limited access to quality healthcare is a life-or-death reality faced by too many Oklahomans. Where people live or how much they earn are often deciding factors in accessing quality healthcare facilities or services, especially for rural citizens. Over the past four years, hospitals and clinics closing across rural Oklahoma caused women to travel far to access maternal and natal care (Nuñez, 2023). Access to comprehensive women's healthcare is often neglected or politicized. For Oklahoma to thrive economically, adequate access to healthcare for all is necessary.

Elected officials have an obligation to serve the best interests of their constituents. Unemployment, Workers' Compensation, and Human Services focusing on educating, re-training, and assisting Oklahomans in becoming fiscally independent are paramount in a strong economy and critical to post-pandemic prosperity. In providing economic and entrepreneurial opportunities for all Oklahomans, the state legislature must ensure that women have equal

pay for equal work. When the state legislature supports bills that discriminate against gender, ability, race, religion, creed, or sexual orientation, these are detrimental to long and short-term economic growth by closing economic doors against a skilled population. Discriminating against women is shutting out half of the population from economic prosperity. Ignoring the needs of women is an incentive for women to gather together to advocate for their needs.

Another issue for Oklahoma women is that Oklahoma is the number two overall incarcerator in the nation and the number one incarcerator of women worldwide. The state Department of Corrections has become dependent on private prisons, costing taxpayers more money, as the state pays private corporations to house inmates. In 2015 alone, $92.7 million taxpayer dollars went to privately owned prisons Oklahoma jails (Human Rights Defense Center, 2017). This level of incarceration and the cost to Oklahoma is unsustainable. The criminal sentencing and justice system must evolve and meet the demands of modern society. Locking up individuals for non-violent or drug-related crimes destroys families, hurts the economy, and only increases the difficulties the Department of Corrections is facing. Here is another incentive for women to advocate for more humane and effective jurisprudential outcomes.

On January 21, 2017, the day after Donald Trump's Presidential inauguration, up to four and a half million people, the majority of them women, marched across America to show their disapproval of Trump's political agenda and planned policies in what will go down in history as the inter-sectional character embodiment of present-day gender politics in America. The effects of that nationwide march go far beyond a few speeches and a day of vocal group chanting in city centers. The Women's March (the March) was reminiscent of The Great Washington March of 1963 and similar events from the decades following. However, the Women's March was the first mass-scale protest led by women who potentially would become the primary sufferers after Trump's win in

November 2016. The March also marked a shift in the methods of feminist political resistance. The subtler theoretical debates and disjointed expressions of disapproval for acts of patriarchal discrimination, which had mushroomed in social and dominant media in the preceding years, gave ground to protesters' more radical, physical presence in the streets (Misiak, 2018).

Indeed, even if certain aspects of the pre – and post–2017 Women's March feminism do not seem to be poles apart, some activist circles continue their work for gender emancipation. We can now observe a reinforcement of previously smaller-scale or marginal tendencies and directions. The illusion that *feminism has done its job* can no longer convince American women that they are being offended and discriminated against by the man at the top of the political power structure. The March demonstrated that ordinary women are angry and thus much more likely to be interested in radical discourse, even more than in any other form of a feminist message. The March revealed that to be convincing and socially visible, contemporary feminists could no longer dedicate their time to writing theory books and teaching the already privileged masses in Western-style universities. Instead, they needed to openly espouse their criticism of patriarchy outside academia (Misiak, 2018).

Even if, as some have claimed, the Women's March of 2017 only served to mobilize those women who had already been convinced that they needed to stand against sexism and patriarchal abuse, it certainly made them more active and politicized. The street protests sparked an upsurge in feminist spirit. They strengthened women's vigilance of gender equality, followed by a wave of social media campaigns and smaller-scale initiatives devised to incentivize women to oppose patriarchal abuse and the lack of equal gender treatment. Across Oklahoma, women and men marched on January 21, 2017. Moreover, 2017 and 2018 witnessed the unveiling of sexual harassment in film and TV industries and political circles, the #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns, the rise in

political commentary on women's rights on Facebook and Twitter, the birth of support groups for women who fall victim to sexual harassment, the growing popularity of feminist podcasts, as well as open and dominant media debates on the gender pay gap, and rape cultures. These can be read as products of the new feminist renaissance (Misiak, 2018).

So, what does a "new feminist renaissance" mean for women in solidly Republican states like Oklahoma? Despite the prevalence of women who identify as Republican, dedicated groups of women in Oklahoma continue to fight for political change. The history of women's political participation in Oklahoma is long and varied. However, these are the efforts of *individual* women, which do not constitute a women's social, economic, or political movement. Oklahoma state chapters of The Women's March, particularly in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, demonstrate an upsurge in the recognition by women (and male supporters) of the need to stand up and be heard. Following the 2016 election, more women have run for office in Oklahoma than at any other period, and women teachers have protested in large numbers at the statehouse for more resources for schools, children, and pay.

In the 2016 election, not a single Oklahoma county voted for Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump. In January 2017, Gallup ranked Oklahoma as the nation's fourth most conservative state, just ahead of Alabama, based on the percentage of the state's population that self-identified as conservative. In February of that year, the Washington Post placed Oklahoma on its list of ten states where the Democratic Party is on life-support. Then, something changed. In May of 2018, Anna Langthorn, then 24 years old, ran and won the race to become the chair of Oklahoma's Democratic Party on a platform of better-preparing candidates to run for office. Since Langthorn won, Oklahoma has held four special elections for state legislative seats that Republicans held. They all flipped from Republican to Democrat despite all being solid-red Trump districts (Joyce, 2018).

Of course, the success of Oklahoma Democrats under Langthorn has been aided by the backlash to the presidency of Donald Trump. Yet no conservative state has seen the consistent Democratic victories that Oklahoma has seen in the Trump era. However, nationally, Oklahoma still has a long way to go. Two of the seventeen congressional races of 2018 that did not have a declared Democratic candidate are in Oklahoma. Ultimately, Langthorn desired to reach a broad swath of voters in Oklahoma, even those in rural bastions of conservatism, by rebranding the Democratic Party as a party that can bring tangible social goods and services to voters (Joyce, 2018).

OKLAHOMA WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE CURRENT ERA

To assess the causes and effects of the women's movement in Oklahoma, we examine the mission, goals, and reach of women's groups within the state; then, we interviewed the leadership of women's groups in the state using the open-format snowball technique following the flow of conversations and follow-up on any additional information we gathered.

While there are numerous smaller groups throughout the state, any groups that hold hope of possessing a coveted seat at the table or may be able to show teeth in this fight are based in and around Oklahoma City and Tulsa, leaving large swaths of the female population completely out of the larger conversation. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge and explore each while focusing on their background, mission, current issues of interest, reach, and members, allowing a further and fuller understanding of how each of these individual groups are connected from Oklahoma's urban centers to rural Oklahoma women and the common issues that we all face.

The box below presents the group of organizations discussed in this paper and is not an exhaustive list of women's organizations

in Oklahoma. Most of the organizations provide education regarding their specific mission on women's issues; others provide training and promotion for community members wanting to engage in advocacy and run for office, and other groups offer services to women who are victims of domestic violence, date-violence, trafficking, and other social welfare and healthcare issues. Each women's organization is a part of the whole movement supporting women's issues in Oklahoma. That these groups take on the diversity of needs is both necessary and sufficient to comprise the whole of the current women's movement in the state.

Overlapping and complementary missions:
Education and the improvement of the lives of women and girls.

American Association of University Women	Advance gender equity
Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women:	Education/ Social and Political Advocacy
League of Women Voters:	Education / Voting / Citizen Participation
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women:	Education/ Social and Political Advocacy
Native Alliance Against Violence:	Social assistance for victims/Resource connections
OK Women's Coalition:	Health & Wellness, Economic Security
Women's Foundation:	Challenge Grants, Economic Security
Women Lead Oklahoma:	Civic education and engagement

Political Advocacy for women and children's issues

American Association of University Women	Education for Social and Political Advocacy
Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women:	Social Change, Health & Wellness
Oklahoma Women's Coalition:	Health & Wellness, Economic Security, Violence
Women's March Oklahoma:	Transformational Change / End Violence / Human Rights
Women's March on Tulsa:	Transformational change / End Violence / Human Rights

Training and Recruitment for political participation and political office

League of Women Voters
Sally's List
Women Lead Oklahoma: Leadership training

The history of women's suffrage action began in Oklahoma when it was still a territory. In 1890, the Women's Christian Temperance Union petitioned lawmakers to give women the right to vote on school boards. Laura A. Gregg arrived in the territory in 1895, leading a new chapter of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Territory Equal Suffrage Association, led by Margret Rees, joined with NAWSA to present voting rights bills to the territory legislature in 1897 and 1899 without success. Together with women in the Indian Territories, the Twin Territorial Suffrage Association was formed in 1904. In 1906, at the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention, Laura Gregg and Dr. Frances Woods managed to get equal suffrage debated, but women only received the right to vote on school boards; they did not gain the franchise (Corbett, n.d.)**. In 1918, the women's movement successfully put a state constitutional amendment before voters to extend the franchise to women**. It passed on November 18, 1918, two years before the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. Oklahoma ratified the 19th Amendment on February 28, 1920 (National Park Service, 2019). After achieving women's suffrage, the once widespread women's movement in Oklahoma appeared moribund until the turn of the 21st Century.

In 1919, Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a "league of women voters to finish the fight and aid in the reconstruction of the nation" (League of Women Voters of Oklahoma, 2019). Women Voters was formed within the NAWSA, composed of the organizations within the states where women's suffrage had already been attained. On February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified, the organization was formally established in Chicago as the National *League of Women Voters*. Oklahoma's first chapter was founded in Muskogee in December 1920, led by Josephine Brown (Schrems, n.d.). From the very beginning, the legislative goals of the League were not exclusively focused on women's suffrage but on citizen education across the electorate (League of Women Voters of Oklahoma,

2019).

Since its beginning in Chicago, Illinois, the League of Women Voters has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. In fact, the first League convention voted 69 separate items as statements of principle and recommendations for legislation. Among them were protections for women and children, the rights of working women, the legal status of women, and American citizenship. The first major national legislative success was the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act, providing federal aid for maternal and childcare programs (League of Women Voters of Oklahoma, 2019). In the 1930s, members worked successfully to enact the Social Security Act and the Food and Drug Act. Due at least in part to League efforts, legislation passed in 1938 and 1940 removed hundreds of federal jobs from the spoils system and placed them under Civil Service. During the postwar period, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. Participation. The League was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization; it still maintains official observer status today (League of Women Voters of Oklahoma, 2019).

The aim of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities. It is a nonpartisan political organization that acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels, builds citizen participation in the democratic process, and engages communities in promoting solutions to public policy issues . The public policy Education Fund builds citizen participation in the democratic process, studies key community issues at all governmental levels, and enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues. The organization believes in respect for individuals, the value of diversity, removing barriers to democratic participation, and the empowerment of grass root action, both within the League and in communities. (League of Women Vot-

ers of Oklahoma, 2019). Can a national, bipartisan organization be truly considered to be a part of a women's movement? Yes of course. The focus is on women, in a bipartisan manner, focusing on women's rights and needs, with a solid ball in the political game.

The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma is active on both Twitter (now X) and Facebook but is not substantially present. On Facebook, they are followed by just over 1400 (1672 on 11/3/2020) people, and on Twitter, followers number less than 500 (League of Women Voters of Oklahoma, 2019). The Tulsa Metropolitan chapter of LWV is followed by just over 2,000 (2278 on 11/3/2020) people.

While more than 12,000 women and their allies marched down N. Lincoln Boulevard on January 21, 2017, before overflowing the south lawn of the capital building, to listen to women activists and lawmakers on the day of the National Women's March, the organizers behind the Women's March on Oklahoma pondered how to channel the March's energy into action that produced political change. Sacia Fowler, an organizer, asked, "What is the best way to ensure this does not die because we have a huge fight?" She said this question ran through her mind for months following the first March. Lindsey Kanaly, the lead orchestrator of the Oklahoma Women's March, said, "We didn't want to reinvent the wheel or anything that local organizers were already doing. We got into the mode of amplifying messages and events to get people involved… We had the Women's March movement, and what they were doing was focusing on social justice issues. We were supportive of that, but we also felt like there was more we could do." (Fowler, 2020). Since the first Oklahoma Women's March, Fowler and Kanaly, along with dozens of other women, launched March On as a women-led advocacy organization to broaden the reach and goals of the well-known March. The goal is to crowdsource a political platform between women and allies and then use that platform to enact changes within the political system (Eastes, 2017).

Through an "army of marchers," also known as "marchroots," these women plan to "take concrete, coordinated action at the federal, state, and local levels." Kanaly stated, "We've come together to focus on elections at all levels, school boards up to Congress and the President. Our mission is to inform politics and create progressive political change from the local to the national level." (Eastes, 2017). While their presence may be small, their voices are mighty

The first sign of the potential development of a true women's movement in the state occurred when four women came together in 2007, Dr. Jean Warner, Donna Lawrence, Jan Peery, and Pat Potts, sharing the common vision "of a statewide coalition of women that would unite individuals and organizations as one powerful voice to initiate positive change for Oklahoma's women and girls." (CITE). Their shared passion ultimately led to the founding of the Oklahoma Women's Coalition, which became public on February 18, 2009.

The Oklahoma Women's Coalition (OWC) is a statewide network of individuals and organizations that work together to improve the lives of women and girls through education and advocacy. Moreover, the Coalition promotes nonpartisan efforts while addressing issues important to the progress of Oklahoma's women. They want Oklahoma to be known as a state with great opportunities for women to succeed at work, at home, and in their communities while promoting opportunities for success (Oklahoma Women's Coalition: One Voice for Women and Girls, 2019).

The OWC supports legislative priorities that are important to women and families, such as a teacher pay raise proposal supported by Gov. Stitt, which was approved by the House Appropriations and Budget Committee in 2020. Support in the state legislature for healthy relationships and consent education to combat adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is actively on their agenda. They oppose legislation allowing adult residents to carry a gun

without any training or a background check due to the direct connection to gun access and domestic violence. OWC continues to track progress being made around potential Medicaid expansion legislation, including supporting a campaign to put the question on a statewide ballot initiative.

Women make about $.70 for every dollar men earn, and OWC works closely with legislators to construct a law requiring pay transparency. Some legislators want to exclude small businesses pay transparency legislation. The OWC fights for the voices of women represented in smaller businesses to ensure they have a viable pathway to advocate for themselves and a fair salary, regardless of the number of employees (Oklahoma Women's Coalition: One Voice for Women and Girls, 2019).

The Oklahoma Women's Coalition exhibits a healthy presence on social media with active accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. While their followers on Twitter number less than 2,000, almost 4,000 (4800 on 11/3/2020) people follow them on Facebook. For one of the more active women's groups in the state, it is a positive space to occupy (Oklahoma Women's Coalition: One Voice for Women and Girls, 2019).

The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma was established in 2003 with a challenge grant from the Chambers Family Fund that prioritized building a permanent resource for women and girls in the state. Since its inception, the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma has invested over $725,000 through grants to organizations focused on economic self-sufficiency for women and brighter futures for our state's girls, with over $400,000 supporting educational opportunities for single mothers in Oklahoma higher education. The view of the Foundation is that even with the opportunities made available to women in recent history, women still experience barriers that negatively impact children, families, and communities. Wage inequity, poverty, teen pregnancy, family responsibility, and insufficient education or job skills are just a few

of the many challenges preventing Oklahoma women and girls from achieving equality and economic self-sufficiency.

Funding through the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma has improved access to education, jobs, and asset growth. Outcomes include reduced teen pregnancy rates, an increased number of women and girl completing their education, supporting positive early job experiences, and strengthening sustainable economic self-sufficiency. (Women's Foundation of Oklahoma, 2019).

While the national chapter of the Women's Foundation has a robust social media presence, the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma has almost no social media presence whatsoever. This makes it difficult to gauge their membership, events, current issues, or their reach and influence on campuses (Women's Foundation of Oklahoma, 2019).

Women face more significant hurdles to entering the political process than men. These obstacles are both real and perceived. Women are much less likely to run without being asked and are less likely to be recruited to run for elected office. More importantly, women are less likely to see themselves as qualified to run, even women at the top of their fields. The barriers to closing the gender gap are significant, but there is a path forward. When women are recruited to stand for office, they are more than three times as likely to consider a run. Yet, that decision can be overwhelming.

Another organization incentivizing women to run for office is Sally's List, a nonpartisan organization with a clear mission: to recruit, train, and help elect progressive women to public office in Oklahoma. It was created in 2010. Currently, women represent 14% of Oklahoma's legislative body, while women comprise 51% of the general population. They envision a legislature that reflects the female demographic of Oklahoma. More women serving in office are vital to a government supporting its people in health, education, and a strong economy. Sally's List prepares candidates

and hosts networking events that help remove the real and perceived barriers that often prevent women from running. By recruiting, training, and helping elect progressive women to public office, Sally's List ensures that all Oklahomans' best interests are well served (Sally's List, 2019). Sally's List knows that far more issues unite us than divide us, and that is why we work with candidates–regardless of political party– who prioritize the needs of their communities. Our Lawmakers have an obligation to craft the best policies for all Oklahomans, and the most effective way is by working across the aisle with productive and respectful dialogue.

Changing the face of Oklahoma politics will take time and dedicated effort. ("Sally's List - Overview, News & Competitors | ZoomInfo.com"). The organization supports and trains women from diverse backgrounds and empowers them to be strong, capable candidates. They encourage women to start early and run competitive campaigns, introducing potential candidates to the details of the campaign process as well as providing intensive one-on-one training. Candidates say that even if they do not win, they become stronger because they have reshaped the conversation (Sally's List, 2019). Their record of success includes former candidates now serving in the Oklahoma House, Senate, Norman City Council, and on the Tulsa School Board. From the first small class of candidates, Sally's List has grown exponentially - identifying, recruiting, and preparing women to run for office at the state and local level (Sally's List, 2019). Sally's List is continually active on social media with a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram account. Nearly 5,000 (4588 on 11/3/2020) people follow Sally's List on Facebook. Almost 1,300 people follow Sally's List on Twitter, and their Instagram boasts nearly 1,000 followers. Their record of success includes former candidates now serving in the Oklahoma House, Senate, Norman City Council, and on the Tulsa School Board (Sally's List, 2019). The organization is continually active on social media with a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram account. Nearly 5,000 (4588 on 11/3/2020) people follow Sally's List on Facebook. Almost 1,300 people follow Sally's List on Twitter, and

their Instagram boasts nearly 1,000 followers.

Growing out of Sally's List, *Women Lead Oklahoma* was founded in 2015 by Representative Kendra Horn and Sara Jane Rose of Sally's List to catalyze change through programs that make it easy to understand the structures that govern civic life and interpersonal communication. Beyond the current headlines and real-life experiences of women in our state, a fundamental knowledge gap prevents civic engagement and leadership. "We know that when women are engaged in the civic process, in their communities, and the workplace, everyone benefits. This is why our programs focus on structures rather than specific issues. We know this is the key to real and lasting change" (Women Lead Oklahoma, 2019).

Women Lead Oklahoma is a community of women who believe they can make a difference for women in Oklahoma. By creating opportunities to learn, connect, and take action, they challenge the status quo and improve the experience of everyone living and working in this state. They envision a state where women are empowered to act, are community-focused, and civically engaged. Women are empowered to affect change through education and resources that encourage community and civic action" (Women Lead Oklahoma, 2019).

Women Lead Oklahoma exhibited a vibrant social media presence with active Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. They numbered over 6,000 on Facebook, over 500 on Twitter, and over 1,000 on Instagram. In 2020, it suddenly disappeared from social media.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT BY NATIVE WOMEN

Finally, we investigated how Native women work for political change in Oklahoma. Much of their efforts are focused on supporting families and communities through advocacy and services. "In 1996 Peggy Bird (Kewa), Darlene Correa (Laguna Pueblo),

and Genne James (Navajo) began The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW) to support other advocates working to educate, prevent, and provide assistance for domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and sex trafficking." Their mission is to advocate for change within communities where Natives live. In pursuing violence-free communities, the organization educates the Native community and supports advocacy through the power of unity (CSVANW, 2020). The original Coalition was created in New Mexico, included parts of Colorado and Arizona, and recently established a chapter in Oklahoma.

Over more than twenty years, the Coalition has included partnerships with tribal leaders, working with state and federal representatives "to develop legislation to support best practices in education, programming, and assistance for Native women and children." They support organizations that provide direct services but do not provide specific services themselves . The Coalition provides training and education for adults as well as technical assistance. They also engage in policy advocacy, write Impact Reports, and provide community support, including Native Youth initiatives.

A partner with the Coalition in Oklahoma through the *Native Indigenous Women's Resource Center* is the Native Alliance Against Violence (Native Allliance Against Violence, 2020). Created in 2009 and led by Executive Director Shelley Miller, the organization is headquartered in Norman, Oklahoma (Native Alliance Against Violence, 2020) and is a nonprofit organization organizing a coalition of thirty-eight Oklahoma tribes divided into five regions. Each tribe and tribal region has an organized nonprofit assisting women, children, and families affected by domestic violence, trafficking, and stalking by connecting them to services. Included in the organization is *The Coordinated Indigenous Resource Center for Legal Empowerment,* also called the *Circle Project*, which is connected to many state, federal, and tribal legal resources and represents Native Americans all over Oklahoma (Native Allliance Against Violence, 2020).

Another women's organization advocates for the families of Native women who are missing or who have been murdered. Native women in Oklahoma successfully created a state-wide network of chapters of *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women* (MMIW). On January 19, 2020, chapters from around the state met in Lawton, OK at the Comanche Nation Complex and voted for their first state President, Carmen Thompson (Scavelli, 2020), (Haliburton, 2020). They partner with the Native Alliance Against Violence and the CSVANW to engage in social and political advocacy, education of the public about trafficking, and violence directed at Native women.

Social media interactions for these Native-focused organizations on Facebook and Instagram are widespread and are posted by organization advocates, family members, and survivors. However, circumstances such as living in violent relationships and those who are trafficked may limit access to these social media sites.

SOCIAL MEDIA
Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women
Facebook: 7,561 followers (8622 on 11/3/20)
Twitter: 718 followers
Instagram: 869 followers
Native Alliance Against Violence
Facebook: 3100 followers (3282 on 11/3/20)
Twitter: 718 follwers
Instagram: 869 followers
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
Facebook: 3,086 followers (1468 on 11/3/20)
Twitter: 597 followers
Instagram: 2864 followers

CONCLUSION

To establish the growth of the women's movement in Oklahoma, we have located and laid out those organizations existing prior

to the 2016 election and those that either came into being or rose into greater prominence following the 2016 election. The growth of women's advocacy organizations began slowly. One group was founded in 2003, and others in 2009 and 2016. One new coalition was formed in January 2020. One organization folded back into its parent. Some groups are chapters of regional or national organizations, indicating access to the broader women's movement across the United States. Each group represents a comprehensive focus on women's issues, leaning into those issues in specific ways. As these groups intermingle members and support each other's activities, they comprise the breadth and depth of the women's movement in Oklahoma.

From a thorough reading of websites, it does not appear that the 2016 or the 2020 election boosted some due to their focus on specific issues such as domestic violence and trafficking, education, and healthcare. Those focused on broader political outcomes grew in prominence and support. While public demonstrations have decreased over the past three years, membership in social media sites increased until November 3, 2020, when a fall-off in membership was observed.

Five of the numerous Oklahoma women's groups possess the most far-reaching abilities and have the most impact. However, as the evidence suggests, membership, as measured via social media, is dismal at best. Oklahoma is home to about two million women. A future question to research is to discover why Oklahoma's women are opting to sit out rather than participate in advocating for women's issues and with the groups that focus on them. Another question is how Oklahoma's women's participation compares to women's participation in other "Red" states and with women in "Blue States" across the U.S.?

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