

# **Dimensions of Dissent:**

## **The Urban Landscapes of the 2017 Women's March in the United States**

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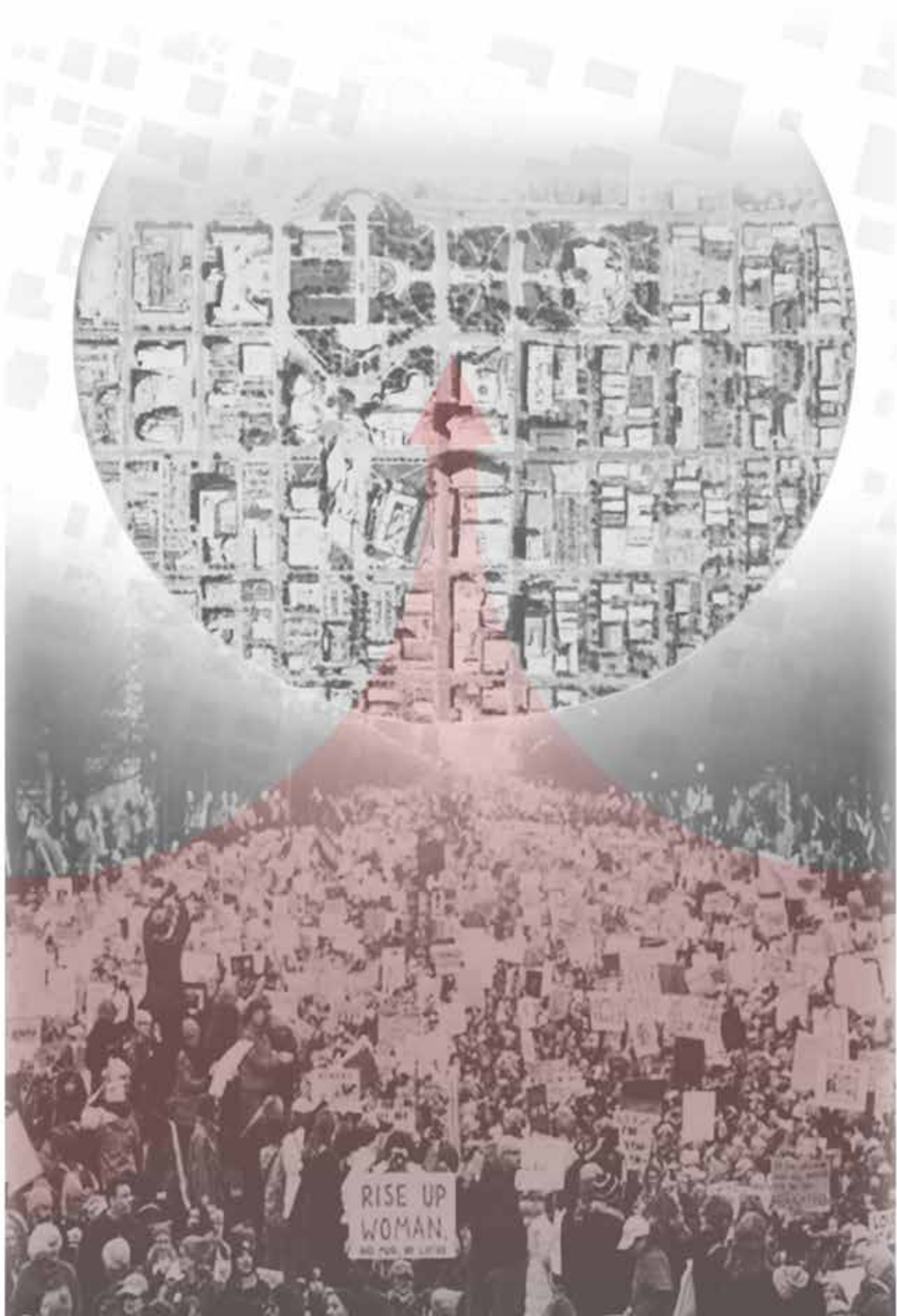
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### Abstract

How do the landscapes of the 2017 Women's March in the United States embrace the potential for socio-political dialogue within the urban context of 21st century cities? This research examines the routes and destinations taken by march participants in six American cities, looking at the design of the route, mode of procession, space of gathering, edge of dissension, and focus of the occupation. This analysis will provide perspectives on how people use and occupy urban spaces for democratic peaceful protest. The analysis of the spatial framework for these planned protests will suggest ways for landscape architects to understand and advocate for the relationship between designed public space and the ideals of public democracy.

*"We are experiencing a global shift toward a 'social movement society' in which protest is a routine part of political bargaining."*  
-Jenkins et al



## **Acknowledgments**

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To my Family- Susan, Hans, Adelle, & Norelle

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To my Professors- Hopman, Fain, Archambeau, & Herzog

To my Graduate Classmates- at the University of Texas at Arlington

To my Mentors & Co-workers- at CallisonRTKL

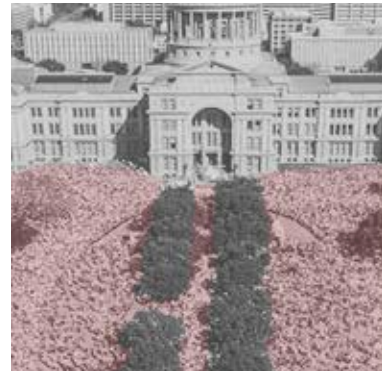
To my Friends- in Dallas-Fort Worth, Arkansas, & everywhere else

Thank you.



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## Introduction

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In considering the design of protest events, one might assume a certain set of conditions, for example the focus of civic monuments and buildings within an appropriated public civic space. However, are these conditions constant and required throughout all protest events? This research examines the destinations and routes taken by participants in the 2017 Women's March to better understand the role landscape architecture and urban design play in supporting and advocating for the ideals of public democracy during times of civil unrest. To quote the recently renewed Landscape Declaration, "Landscape architects bring different and often competing interests together so as to give artistic physical form and integrated function to the ideals of equity, sustainability, resiliency and democracy." Landscape architects are part of a prestigious profession in which knowledge of environmental and socio-cultural systems are constantly intertwined and utilized while designing spaces for people. Here, the socio-cultural system of democracy is the portion of the declaration that provides focus... "democracy provides citizens with 'the right to the city,' which includes the right to participation and appropriation in their shared urban environment" (Parkinson, 2015, p. 25). For this reason, the discussion of the landscapes of protest is crucial to the advocacy of the democratic ideals of American culture.

I ask, how do the landscapes of the 2017 Women's March in the United States embrace the potential for socio-political spatial dialogue within the urban context of 21st century cities? This thesis looks specifically at examples from the 2017 Women's March to explore possible commonalities in the kinds of urban spaces that provide a platform for large-scale, peaceful demonstrations.

The 2017 Women's March was chosen because it took place in multiple locations around the world at the same time with a common underlying mission to "dismantle systems of oppression through nonviolent resistance and building inclusive structures guided by self-determination, dignity and respect" (Women's March, 2017). The 2017 Women's March was the largest single-day protest in U.S. history with approximately 4 million participants. The cities which embraced some of the largest numbers of participants during this historic protest event include, but are not limited to, Washington D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, and Denver. To explore these questions of public space and protest, I look closely at the design of the

route, mode of procession, space of gathering, edge of dissension, and focus of the occupation of these cities. It should be noted that this research does not intend on looking at specific design elements within each public space. This research instead, explores the broader spatial framework of this planned protest.

This analysis provides perspectives on how people use and occupy urban spaces for democratic peaceful protest when these spaces may serve as platforms for realizing social change. Figure-ground maps are created and utilized to reconstruct the spatial context and dimension of the occupation in each city. In addition, a standardized, open-ended interview approach is taken with event organizers, subject matter experts, that does not require an IRB approval.

I conclude that in the context of this contemporary protest, the 2017 Women's March, two linked landscapes matter: the procession through the city, offering visual opportunity for remote viewers and media coverage as well as, and the spatial form of gathering, both the crowds and the space occupied. There are many overarching similarities or dimensions to the design of these protests, however each event proves unique in its ability to adapt in the respective urban landscapes provided. Each city offers a unique urban fabric met at the intersection of local geography, cultural history, and economic influences from which to democratically perform.



## Research Questions

How do the landscapes of the 2017 Women's March in the United States embrace the potential for socio-political spatial dialogue within the urban context of 21st century American cities?

In considering the design of protest events, one might assume a certain set of conditions, for example the focus of civic monuments and buildings within an appropriated public civic space. However, are these conditions constant and required throughout all protest events?

Do the marches focus on similar destinations – either civic spaces or civic buildings with public space around them? If so, what can landscape architects learn about the importance of providing ample public space in civic and neighborhood design?

Are the civic spaces utilized for large scale permitted protests adequate for the purpose? Are they large enough, accessible enough, visible enough?

How is this research significant to the practice of Landscape Architecture and the advocacy of democratic speech? Essentially, can landscape architecture be an appropriate mechanism to support democratic speech during an act of civil dissent?

## Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide background information not otherwise provided within the body of the text

### ***Civic Space:***

Can be a community space near or at the core of the city's center that embodies the symbolic, cultural, and historical identity of the city and its governance. These spaces are available to citizens as platforms of social and economic exchanges. "Civic squares incorporate architectural elements (e.g. scale, symmetry, monumental buildings, and symbolic icons) to position individuals within a meaningful social hierarchy that promulgates implicit power relationships" (Hatuka, 2018, p. 36).

### ***Democratic Speech:***

One of the founding principles of the United States that Americans cherish is the right to freedom of speech. Enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution, freedom of speech grants all Americans the liberty to criticize the government and speak their minds without fear of being censored or persecuted (U. S. Constitution, Amendment 1). For the purpose of this paper, democratic speech commonly refers to the dissension expressed in protest.

### ***Dissent:***

The holding or expression of opinions at variance with those commonly or officially held (English Oxford Dictionary). For this paper, dissent is used interchangeably with public demonstration and protest.

### ***Edge of Dissension:***

Figure 4-11 illustration by author, graphically represents the approximate crowd density of each occupation. I define edge of dissension as the boundary or limits of the thousands of participants as they are shaped by the urban landscape around them.

### ***Figure-ground map:***

Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim in their book, *Cartographic Grounds: Projecting the Landscape Imaginary*, use maps to "merge spatial precision and cultural imagination." They state: the ability of maps to not only represent space but also to depict "unseen and often immaterial forces" holds the "projective potential of cartographic practices that afford greater connection with the ground itself, making present and vivid the landscape, as it exists and as it could be, both to the eye and the mind (Desimini et al, 2016, p. 8).

### ***Focus of Occupation:***

At the terminus of every route is a destination, or space of gathering. Within these gathering spaces, lies the focus of the occupation, commonly an institutional building or landmark. Figure 4-10 highlights the architectural focus of each occupation. "Processions sometimes pass by institutional buildings or spaces. Referring more to their secondary identities as representations of power and locations of other remembered events or spaces than their primary identities, which are derived from public use" (Hatuka, 2018, p. 113).

### ***Mass Occupation:***

"Occupation by a social movement, on the contrary, aims to liberate space to allow a population to act in it in defiance of authorities' attempt to subdue and exclude them. Occupation is therefore an exercise of freedom of speech and public communication, a practice of democracy with the implicit or explicit claim that the public authorities are violating democratic principles by preventing occupiers from exercising their rights" (Hammond, 2013, p. 501).

### ***Political Participation:***

Can be defined as an "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making of implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make these" (Verba et. al., 2002, p. 9). Other forms of political participating include protest.

### ***Procession:***

Refers to the actions "of a body of people going or marching along in orderly succession in a formal or ceremonial way, festive, occasion, or demonstration" (Oxford English Dictionary).

### ***Protest:***

Is any "planned events in a space that is envisioned in the minds of its organizers, who seek to publicly challenge the political distance between those who rule and those who are ruled" (Hatuka, 2018, p. 13). For this paper, protest is used interchangeably with public demonstration and dissension.

### ***Public Space:***

Refers to spaces "provided or protected by the state, affording equal and in principle free access to all users as citizens." (Sagan, 2015, p. 11). Public spaces are ideally available and accessible to all peoples at any given time for multiple purposes, including public demonstration.

***Urban Landscape:***

Is defined using several approaches, for instance, urban landscapes can be considered the combination of environmental and human interventions that coexist together in a particular place. The built environment, the socio-economic environment, and the perceived environment are aspect concerned with urban landscapes (Knox, 2013).

## Literature Review

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### *Becoming a Place of Dissent*

#### *I. An Introduction to Public Spaces and the Public Sphere*

Public squares are one of the fundamental elements of city morphology. Urban public squares are open spaces that reflect a city's identity and a community's cultural background (Memluk, 2013, p. 514) through architectural context, location, and design aesthetics. It is in these spaces that urban life takes place. Public squares have long played a central role in cities of democratic cultures. The Greek's 'Agora' was an open space in the city center, usually of the geometric form square or rectangle, where political, social and economic activities took place. The Roman Forum shared similar socio-political characteristics, bringing together trade and political activity, in large open-air spaces framed by basilicas and covered arcades. After the collapse of the Roman Empire the surrounding basilicas were transformed into cathedrals and churches shaping central open public spaces with a religious context. In the middle ages, open public spaces were primarily used for religious ceremonies, because of its surrounding architecture, as well as a marketplace (Zucker, 1973). City morphology begins to change with the influence of rationalization during the neo-classical period. The approaches to planning and design heavily relied on geometric form, symmetry, and order. The use of axes to develop visual perspective and hierarchy became prevalent design principles for the public square (Memluk, 2013). While the context and form of the civic square changed, its importance to civic morphology remained constant.

By the 17th and 18th century, U.S cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Savannah, Georgia grew from idealized, utopian city plans that used the gridiron layout. The gridiron layout offers an opportunity for a series of rhythmically placed openings amongst the built townscape, ultimately influencing the symbolic meaning of early American designs for 'the town square.' (Zucker, 1973). The city morphology centralized public squares to symbolize the importance of shared communal values and democratic public dialogue.

The industrial revolution altered the urban fabric of American cities through the incorporation of new infrastructural systems and rapid increases in population. The development of broad railway networks led to population increase in urban areas and consequentially

the growth of cities. With the increase in population at the time and the growing pollution concerns, the city became unsanitary and social life began to deteriorate. At the beginning of the 20th century, social and environmental concerns prompted the 'City Beautiful' movement in which green spaces emerged as the new public sphere. As elaborated previously, public squares are an essential element to the morphology of cities around the world and across time. Public squares, and public spheres the like, offer both physical, ecological and social benefits to a city's form and function; not coincidentally public squares and parks also contribute largely to the social cohesions and community identity of cities (Upton, 1998, p. 97).



## *II. An Architectural Perspective of Authority and Citizenship in the United States*

Figure-ground studies are a staple of urban design analysis and practice. The Nolli map, a product of twelve years of copious research by Italian surveyor Giambattista Nolli, provides a model figure-ground study of positive (built) and negative (open) spaces in Rome. (Hwang, 2005, p. 3). Completed over 250 years ago in 1748, Nolli's map represents a clear image of the public domain in urban space. Negative areas seen as white spaces represent public spaces, meaning accessible to the public, while positive space, seen as black on the diagram illustrated in Figure 2-2, represents private spaces. The surrounding form, or contextual architecture, ultimately shapes the urban public square and provides the platform and opportunity for several activities, social, political, economic and other. Such activities include leisure play, relaxation, exercise, shopping, celebration, worship, and more specifically political activism which provides eventual focus for this thesis. The relief of these 'negative' spaces posited against the 'positive' structures of the built form, allows the city to become legible and brings identity; here a spatial platform for social cohesion is formed.

Dell Upton, author of *Architecture in the United States*, examines centuries worth of American architectural history through five themes that echo America's diversity: Community, Nature, Technology, Money and Art. Upton's reflection of Community reviews the ways American architecture copes with issues of inclusion and exclusion. In one form of communal representation, authority is recognized through standard spatial design techniques, such as "monumental size, expensive building materials, distinctive architectural decorations, or imagery that makes extraordinary mythical historical claims to antiquity or authenticity for authoritative buildings; and their clustering, emphasis by axial approaches, or simple elevations above their surroundings that sets them apart from their surroundings" (Upton, 1998, p.59). Often spaces of protest are chosen for their authoritative politically symbolic architecture. Consequently, landscape architecture and architecture allow people to conceptualize relationships among citizenship and authority. Architecture is as much a reflection of the community as is the community a behavioral pattern of its surrounding built form. The United States Capitol building, constructed in 1793 in neo-classical geometric form, houses the fundamental institutions of American government- the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Supreme Court. The Capitol building, "with its allusions of a mythic Roman republican past, universal

geometry, and historical events", gives the institutions of government a facade of continuity that belied national divisions (Upton, 1998, p.75). American architecture is intended or rather expected to represent the ideals of citizenship within a democracy through contextual location, and structural design. At the intersection of built form and societal representation, political consensus can be reached or disputed. Architectural symbolism of community defines the dimensions of inclusion and exclusion, stimulating questions about who is represented? Who belongs to the community and in what capacity?

Architectural, civic representation of authority and citizenship has practical consequences on the lives of Americans, most specifically on the simple right to use and appropriate public space. This thesis examines the spatial form in the architectural representations of American community, through authority and citizenship, during times of civil unrest. "The right to appropriation is the right to occupy and use urban space, as well as the right to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants" (Purcell, 2002, p.102). An understanding of American urban and architectural design lends a perspective into today's urban morphology. Nolli's graphical representation Rome's public domain inspires the creation of figure-ground maps of the sites of protest at the 2017 Women's March. These maps clearly diagram today's urban morphology allowing the analysis of its collective behavioral influence on the masses of citizens gathered during a time of civil unrest.

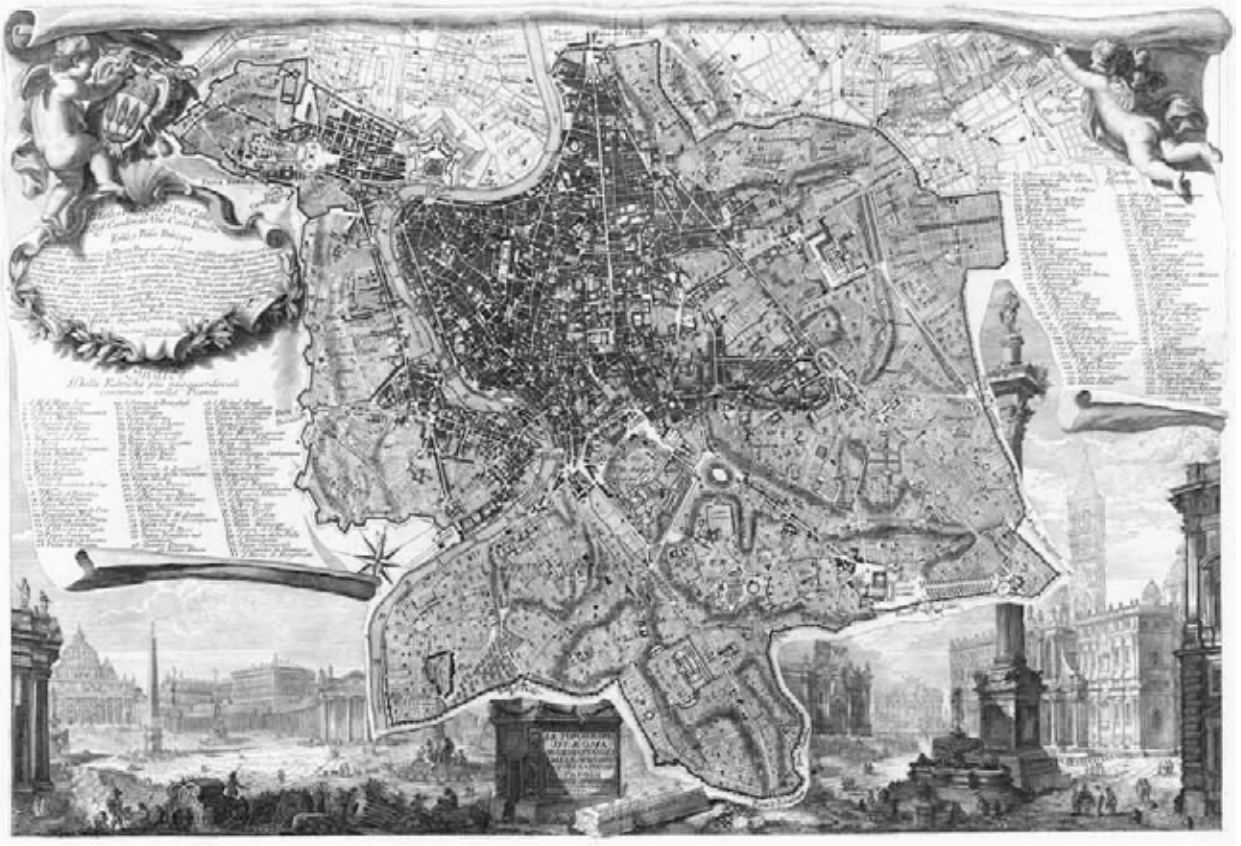


Figure 2-2 Giambattista Nolli's representation of Rome in 1748

### *III. Urban Space and Political Protest*

Regarding the American context, Alexis deTocqueville, a French historian and political scientist, realizes the inevitability, within a democracy, for public spaces in which citizens could be seen, heard and participate in the social and economic exchanges of public life. Thus, a dimension of American democracy can be defined around citizen participation and its public spaces. Citizens of democracy are provided with civic spaces that are a vital medium from which citizens to learn about and act upon their rights, and to organize and act collectively in order to determine their political fate (deTocqueville, 1835, p.73). Due to the democratic ideals civic space represents, the choice of location for protest must reflect these ideals and use mass occupation as a stark contrast. The presence of symbols of state power is highly considered for the selection of a protest site. These material symbols may be buildings, statues, monuments or a civic plaza. Tonkiss (2005) identifies three ideal-types of public space, particularly for urban politics: “the square, a site of collective gathering and belonging; the cafe, a site of more intimate interpersonal exchange; and the street, a site of informal encounters.” Civic squares are a common protest selection site as they often embody civic identity and state power. In regard to a Civil War protest in New York’s Union Square “the powerful image of the large crowd gathered around the statue, waving flags, and listening to speeches supplemented previous views of the city as a static landscape of buildings and streets. Urban space was now seen as an active setting, amplifying the public voice” (Merwood-Salisbury, 2009, p. 541). During protest, the dynamics of the spaces occupied by demonstrators evolves and becomes and temporal avenue for communication.

Social and political protests in urban spaces are multiplying in cities all around the world, particularly in the United States. A public interest project called Crowd Counting Consortium documents crowds and contention in the United States. Their preliminary research documents over 8,700 protests in the U.S. from the 2017 Women’s March through December 31, 2017. Figure 2-5, visualizes the crowd counting data collected by Crowd Counting Consortium, overall it is estimated that “between 5.9 million and 9 million people protested in the US in 2017” (Crowd Counting Consortium). The awareness of the role of space in enhancing the impact of protest demonstrates the growing complexity of citizens who carefully design and plan dissent, and more often, those who design and plan our urban spaces. Upon reviewing recent and relevant literature, news reports, and academic articles, mass occupation through

protests is increasing in scale, scope, and frequency. Considering these socio-political shifts, recent mass occupations for political purposes in civic spaces have taken on new dimensions.



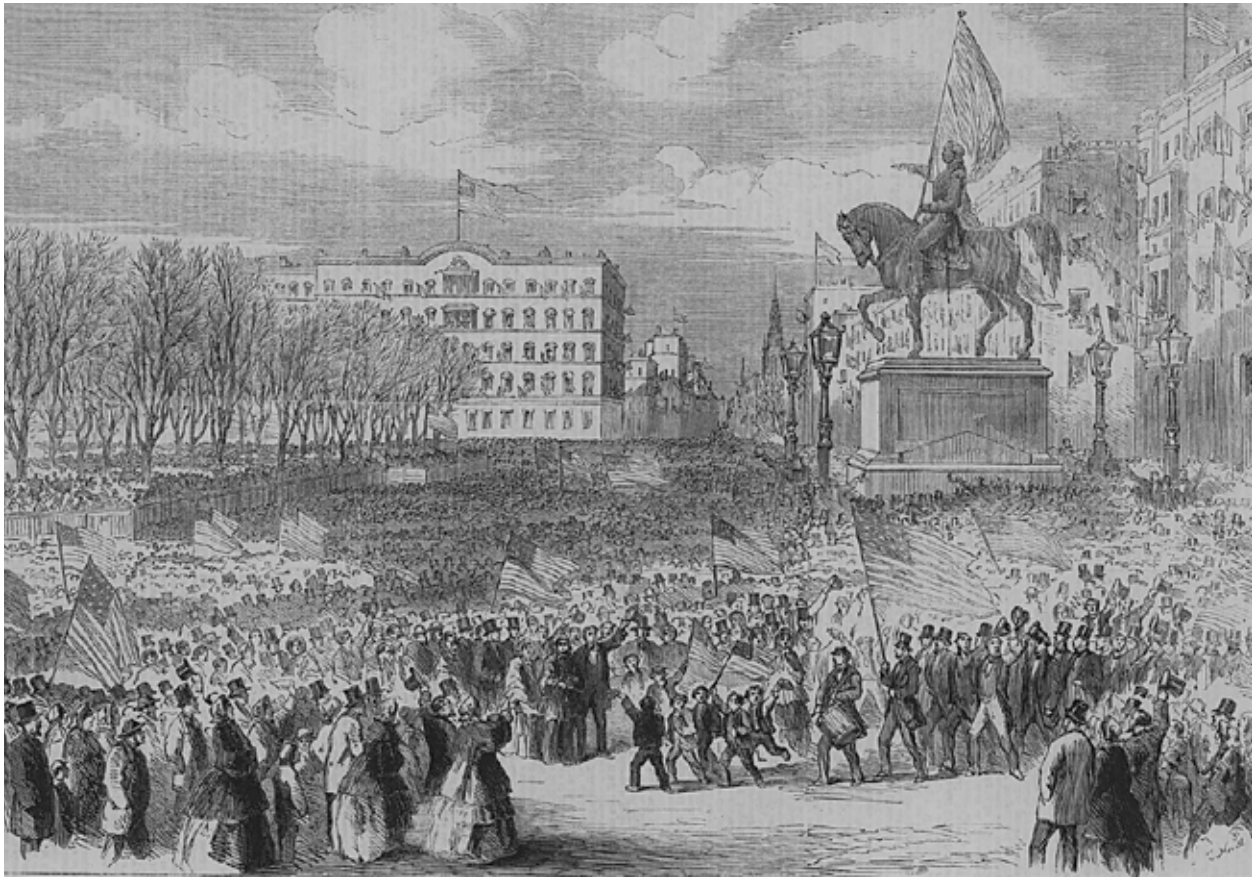


Figure 2-3 The Union mass meeting in Union Square, New York, 20 April 1861

## *Protest Event Analysis*

### *I. Introduction*

As previously defined, protests can be a social movement strategy in which citizens come together to express their dissent over legislation and regulations. America's earliest performance of dissent, The Boston Tea Party, protested British Parliament's tax on tea in expression of anti-royalist power. During this historic event, protesters threw incoming shipments of British tea into the Boston Harbor, setting the stage for the American Revolution. The iconic protest and the events that followed gave rise to a democratic American identity based in citizen participation. As democracy invests the power within its people, it is "unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in the governing process. Political participation provides the mechanism by which citizens can communicate information about their interests, preferences, and needs and generate pressure to respond" (Verba et al., 2002, p.16). These democratic ideals hold steady in 21st century American cities as protest events become more frequent and grow in scale. Many scholars have argued that activities of disruptive social movements are part of the normal political process. Putnam (2000) notes that protesting has become standard operating procedure in the United States. Some of the major social movements during the 20th and 21st centuries include the Antiwar protests, Gay Rights Movement, Anti-globalization, and Occupy Wall Street to name a few. Most recently, during the worldwide Women's March held on January 21, 2017, protesters advocated for legislation and policies regarding human rights and other issues, including women's rights, immigration reform, healthcare reform, reproductive rights, the natural environment, LGBTQ rights, racial equality, freedom of religion, and workers' rights (Women's March, 2017).

### *II. The Design of Protest*

This thesis is influenced by Tali Hatuka's book *The Design of Protest: Choreographing Political Demonstrations in Public Space*, an extension of her exhibit, "Urban Design & Civic Protest," held at MIT School of Architecture and Planning in Boston. Hatuka traveled around the world to study and analyze specific protest events and spaces in several cities including Tiananmen Square in Beijing; the National Mall in Washington D.C.; Rabin Square in Tel Aviv, and the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. Protest has become a timely communicative tool for social change; it is defined by Hatuka as "planned events in a space that is envisioned in the minds of its organizers, who seek to publicly challenge the political distance between those who rule and those who are ruled" (Hatuka, 2018, p.13). Hatuka introduces the importance and relevance of protest event analysis, specifically the analysis of the physical spaces in which they occur, as the world becomes increasingly democratic and urbanized in the 21st

century. The physical space in which protests take place is a critical facet of protests, influencing the performance and behavioral patterns among the participants (Hatuka, 2018, p.3). Her research provides one of the first extensive investigations of the design of protest. Protest event analysis and the physical dimensions of dissent provide a unique perspective, the act of protest as design, for landscape architects, urban designers and other interconnected disciplines such as sociology and psychology.

Her book is a compilation of 10 years of extensive research, data collection, and case study analysis. The methodology behind her research includes four core procedures: 1) archival research on the sites and the events being studied; 2) physical and architectural analyses of the site; 3) interviews with key figures; and 4) interviews with the activists who were involved in the action (Hatuka, 2018, p.18). Through these methods Hatuka studies spectacle, procession, and place-making as attributes to each event and space. *The Design of Protest* concludes with a reflection on the social and political factors that ultimately promote the demonstrations of dissent. These socio-political dynamisms lie at the outskirts of contemporary cities and within the everyday lives and the over looked needs of the people by the state.

In her method of analyses, Hatuka identifies 3 types of 'spatial prototypes of action': spectacle, procession, and place-making. Each prototype offers multiple 'spatial choreographies' Figure 2-4, is a graphic representation, illustrated by Hatuka, of these prototypes and their spatial choreographies. The power of the spectacle provides three different choreographies: theater, ritual, and bareness. The procession offers four choreographies: target, conjoining, synchronicity, and diverse spatial choreographies: reiconization, city design, and narrative. For each type of spatial choreography, and its respective protest event and city, Hatuka delves into the understanding of the space, context, event, and [political] distance through archival research and interviews with key figures and activists. "The interviews with the activists focused on planning the protest and the use of space and included generic questions about the organization of the protest, the planning process for the events, the choice of a particular tactic in a particular place at a particular time, the legality or illegality of the action, policing and violence" (Hatuka, x). Furthermore, Hatuka provides a scaled graphical representation of the built form and space of each protest. She does this as a physical and architectural analyses of the site and provides key features, spatial attributes, and dimensions of distance. Her methods of analysis strengthens the relationship between the protest's social dynamics and architectural condition of citizenship.

## SPECTACLE

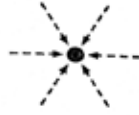
**Theater**  
Rabin Square, Tel Aviv



- Hierarchical Relationships
- Planned Display
- Captured Audience

## PROCESSION

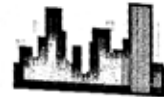
**Target**  
Taksim Square, Istanbul



- Assigned Roles
- Symbolic Reclaiming
- Coordinated Performance

## PLACE-MAKING

**Reiconization**  
Tiananmen Square, Beijing



- Central Locus
- Symbolic Appropriation
- Image Supremacy

**Ritual**  
Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires



- Assigned Role
- Bounded Space
- Repetitiveness

**Conjoining**  
Augustusplatz, Leipzig



- Planned Sequence
- Spatial Reclaiming
- Concretizing Alliance

**City Design** | National Mall,  
Washington, DC



- Power Display
- Territorial Claiming
- Holistic System

**Bareness** | King George/Ben  
Zion Crossroads, Tel Aviv



- Physical Vulnerability
- Spatial Informality
- Reserved Communication

**Synchronicity**  
Worldwide



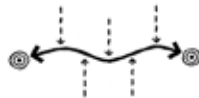
- Orchestrated Spectacle
- Geographic Shrinkage
- Simultaneous Rhythm

**Narrative**  
Zuccotti Park, New York

Of the people,  
by the people,  
for the people

- Of the People
- Illustrative Object
- Accumulative Story

**Elasticity** | Autopista  
Francisco Fajardo, Caracas



- Becoming
- Space as Continuum
- Temporal Rules

Figure 2-4 Key attributes of spatial choreographies. Illustration by Tali Hatuka

### *III. Protest Participation*

As recent protest events become more frequent and grow in scale it is important to remember that voice and equity are central to democratic participation. In his sociological study of protest, Sydney Verba and his coauthors Schlozman and Brady, write in their book, *Voice and Equity*, on the centrality of voice and equity to democracy: “in meaningfully democracy, the people’s voice must be clear and loud--clear so that policymakers understand citizen concerns and loud so that they have an incentive to pay attention to what is said” (Verba et al, 2002, p.1). During protest, citizens express their concerns, however aside from dissent, there are other factors that influence people to participate in protest as a form of political expression. In their article, *Process and Protest: Accounting for Individual Protest Participation*, Schussman and Soule use the American Citizen Participation Survey data (Verba et al 1995a), to perform logistic regression analyses to adjudicate between three core explanations for individual protest. Influencers of protest participation: “biographical availability, political engagement and structural availability” (Schussman et al, 2006, p.5). Interestingly however, Schussman et al. continues his study to find that being asked to protest is the strongest predictor of participating in protest. It is important to note there are numerous other individual characteristics such as political interest and organizational ties that are important predictors of being asked to protest. The higher social and community involvement one has, the more likely one is to be asked to protest, however further research needs to be collected in an effort to explain how these social ties influence being asked to protest.

In understanding the process of protest, McAdam and Paulse (1993) argue that after being asked to participate there are four conditions surrounding the actual decision to protest: “the occurrence of a specific recruiting attempt, the conceptualization of a tentative linkage between movement participation and identity, support for that linkage from persons who normally serve to sustain the identity in question, and the absence of strong opposition from others on whom their salient identities depend” (McAdam, Paulse, 1993, p.662). Some of the greatest socio-political changes were addressed and heard worldwide because of those who made the decision to show up, advocate, and participate. These spatial dialogues between citizen and state cannot prove powerful without those gathering in mass to express themselves and pressure those in political power for a response. Considering this, understanding the social, political, and spatial influences behind protest participation proves useful when focusing on the spaces used for the largest single-day protest in U.S history, the 2017 Women’s March.

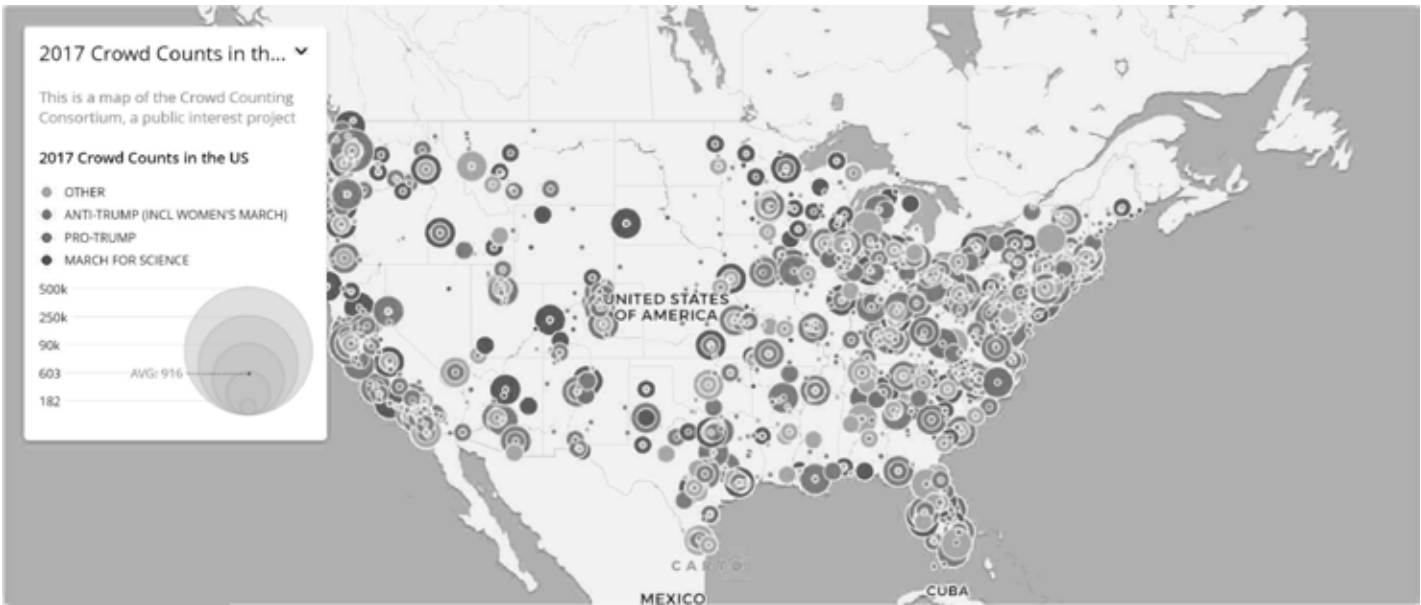


Figure 2-5 Courtesy of Crowd Counting Consortium

## *VI. The 2017 Women's March*

On January 21, 2017, approximately 4 million people around the world stepped out of their daily routine and onto the streets. People of varying backgrounds—young and old, diverse in race and ethnicity, women and men, varying in religious faith, came together in hundreds of thousands upon the urban landscapes on all seven continents of the world. Masses of people showed up to send a unified message that the “human rights and dignity of each person should be protected, and our planet be safe from destruction” (Women’s March, 2017). Women’s rights, reproductive rights, LGBT rights, gender equality, racial equality, and worker rights were the intended conversational foci in the occupation. It is reported that more than 600 cities worldwide held affiliated marches on this day. The 2017 Women’s March was one of the largest coordinated single-day protest in recorded history and the largest in the history of The United States to date.

National and international mass media provided extensive coverage of the march. Across all marches, protesters used signage, chants, and most uniquely symbolic pink hats as a means of communication, alongside the actual occupation of space. The ‘Pussy Hat Project’ helped create a unified image, a visual statement, as part of the design of the protest. Songs, chants, and slogans were accessible for download from multiple dedicated sites. All marches began simultaneously, strengthening the overall impact of the carefully planned and design, globally scaled protest event.

What began as a Facebook event posted by Teresa Shook of Hawaii the day after President Donald Trump’s inauguration in protest of his election and his political agenda, soon blossomed overnight into a call to action. The inspiration for the march is embedded in the “legacy of the movements before us - the suffragists and abolitionists, the Civil Rights Movement, the feminist movement, the American Indian Movement, Occupy Wall Street, Marriage Equality, Black Lives Matter, and more – by employing a decentralized, leader-full structure and focusing on an ambitious, fundamental and comprehensive agenda” (Women’s March, 2017). Thousands of women began signing up for the marches while activists became organizers and began planning what would ultimately be an addition to the legacy of movements as the largest protest in U.S. history.

A Facebook post on the official Women’s March on Washington page reads:

[Participants will] to show our strength, power and courage and demonstrate our disapproval of the new president and his values in a peaceful march. ALL women, femme, trans, gender non-conforming and feminist others are invited to march on Washington DC the day following the inauguration of the President elect. This march is a show of solidarity to demand our safety and health in a time when our country is marginalizing us and making sexual assault an electable and forgivable norm. We align with all POC and LGBTQ causes, and we will show our support in a non-violent protest.

(Women’s March on Washington Facebook Event Page)

This thesis looks specifically at examples from the 2017 Women’s March to explore possible commonalities in the kinds of urban spaces that provide a platform for large-scale, peaceful demonstrations. The 2017 Women’s March was chosen because it took place in multiple locations around the world at the same time. In appropriating urban spaces, symbolic or other, citizens practice their ‘right to the city’, and in this way demands are not only heard, they become measurable with the visualization of occupied space and its dimensions within an urban landscape. To explore the spatial implications of the urban landscapes and designed public space during protest, I look closely at the design of the route, mode of procession, space of gathering, edge of dissension, and focus of the occupation of six American cities. This analysis provides perspectives on how people use and occupy urban spaces for democratic peaceful protest when these spaces may serve as platforms for realizing social change. It should be noted that this research does not intend on looking at specific design elements within each design public space. This research explores the broader spatial framework of this planned protest. The analysis of the spatial framework for these planned protests may suggest ways for landscape architects to understand and advocate for the relationship between designed public space and the ideals of public democracy, and democratic speech.



Figure 2-6 Data compiled by Erica Chenoweth and Jeremy Pressman at the University of Denver and Jeremy Pressman at the University of Connecticut. Image courtesy of Vox.

## Methodology

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### *Our Environment Shapes Us*

#### *I. Bridging the Gap Between Design and Social Sciences*

Both design and social sciences such as sociology, the study of human social relations and institutions, show strong and parallel interests in the role of spatial and physical negotiation in social change. However, as parallel would imply, there remains a gap amongst these fields of study in how they examine these issues. Sociological studies tend to analyze the social outcomes of design decisions. Where sociology may outline human behavior as an effect of certain spatial and physical interventions, an evaluation of design elements is often underutilized. Through an understanding of design, spatial perspectives can unveil the connections between the human experience and broader social, political, and economic processes (Miller, 146). In a general sense, social sciences may be viewed as broad, outward-thinking, social, and theoretical, with the use of writing as its communicative form, while design may be thought of as narrow, inward-looking, physical, and developed through practice (Thorpe, 278). In addition to studying how people occupy, and proclaim themselves within a physical urban context, this thesis concerns itself with narrowing the gap between design and social sciences and ultimately aims at contributing to design activism as a field of interest.

I am proposing to look not just at individual response to design elements, but rather societal understanding of public and urban space, which is an even bigger question and quite different than public space audits or behavior mapping. This thesis does not go into great depth about the individual design elements located along the protest routes or within the public spaces occupied. While these design elements, like street trees, benches, curbs, bollards, etc., shape how people move through space, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to catalog all the design elements along the routes. Furthermore, the most effective study of these elements would occur during a protest event, in which researchers could execute behavior maps and counting studies to understand how large crowds interact with the designed elements of the urban landscape. This is a topic for further research which would provide additional insight.

It is fair to say that design rarely seeks information about user response, in regard to thousands of users at once. In her book, *Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives*, Sarah Williams Goldhagen argues for more understanding of collective

human response to design. “A well-designed, properly constructed environment affects and supports our health, cognitions, and social relations. It meaningfully conveys to each of us that our human presence, not just our productive labor, credit card, or mortgage check, is valued” (Goldhagen, xxiv). Once we shape our environment, it in return shapes us and underlies our human experience. It is therefore, a reflection of our societal ideals and culture by influencing the ways we conduct ourselves as members of groups in society.

Landscape architects are uniquely positioned to bring related professions together into new alliances to address complex social and ecological problems. Thorpe argues for using methods and ideas from social movement studies to develop an initial framework for understanding activism in architecture and design in terms of tactics of resistance (Thorpe, 2010). Studying the available literature on the interrelation of human behavior, public space and protest provides a foundational framework from which to test and potentially support the role of landscape architecture in advocating democratic ideals in America’s cities.



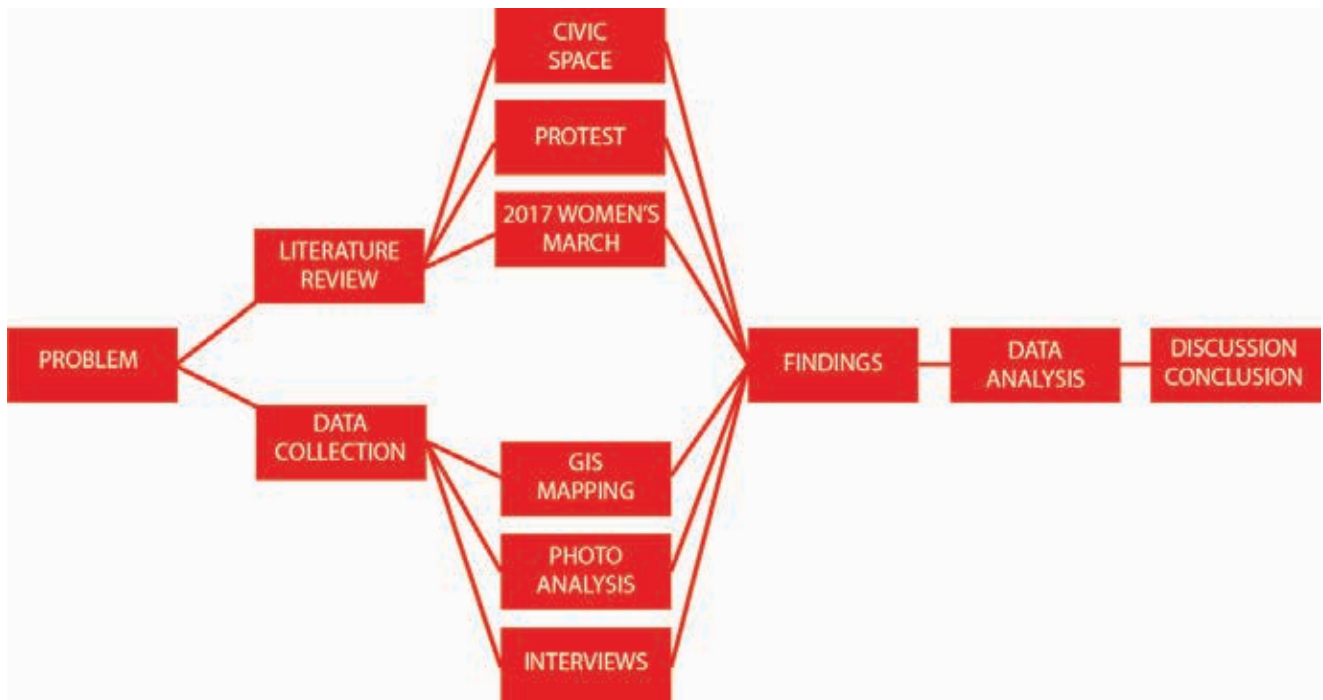


Figure 3-1 Methodology chart. Illustration by author.

## *II. Research and Data Collection*

Hatuka provides a model analysis on how the examination of the urban landscapes of the 2017 Women's March is produced for this research. As discussed, Hatuka compiles 10 years of work into an insightful investigation of the design of protest by focusing on four areas of research: archival research, physical analysis, and interviews with organizers and participants. In comparison, this project is narrowed and uses two similar core methodological procedures: physical and architectural analyses of the sites and interviews with key organizers of the march. Moreover, this paper focuses on one protest event across 6 different U.S. cities as opposed to several cities around the world and multiple protest events.

The main method utilized in this research to explore the urban landscapes of protest of the 2017 Women's March and how they embrace the potential for socio-political spatial dialogue, are case studies comparing the routes and destinations of the march in 6 cities that embraced some of the largest crowds across the United States: Washington D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, and Denver. A methodology chart is provided in Figure 3-1 to depict the process and elements of data collection/analysis involved in this research. The data collection includes occupation numbers submitted by city officials, police estimates, and photo analysis. Figure-ground maps are created, collected, and utilized to reconstruct the spatial context and dimension of the occupation in each city. Included in these mapping methods and data collection is GIS mapping. GIS, Geographic Information Systems Software is designed to store, retrieve, manage, display, and analyze all types of geographic and spatial data. City data including, building foot prints, streets, and land use is collected to create an overlay of the land use patterns presented along the route edges of the marches in these cities. These series of land use maps visualize the relationship of the march to its surrounding urban context. The visualization provides context for characterizing the relationship between the physical structures shaping the urban procession, the architectural focus, and the space of the march destination.

Crowd-counting is a recent science and is used as an approximation technique in this research. Herbert Jacobs, a journalism professor at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s, is credited with modernizing crowd-counting techniques. From his office window, Jacobs could see students gathered on a plaza below protesting the Vietnam War. The plaza's concrete was poured in a grid, so Jacobs counted students in a

few squares to get an average of students per square, then multiplied by the total squares. "He derived a basic density rule that says a light crowd has one person per 10 square feet, a dense crowd has one person per 4.5 square feet, and Yip and Watson's mosh-pit density would have one person per 2.5 square feet" (Goodier, 2017). Using photo analysis and Jacobs' crowd-counting technique, this research estimates and graphically portrays the edge of dissension during the 2017 Women's March in these six American cities.

Mapping techniques prove essential to the foundation of this research in understanding the physical and structural dimensions of dissent, when the streets and urban spaces of some of the largest U.S. cities are flooded with demonstrators. However, another key aspect to understanding the socio-spatial dynamics of dissent is the insight gained from the organizers of the marches. Interviews are conducted to explore the spatial experiences and perceptions of the organizers, or rather subject matter experts. It should be noted that these are public figures, these interviews do not require an IRB approval because this research does not qualify as 'human subject research'. To qualify as 'human subject research' the study must involve the collection of information about one or more living individuals. The study must be entirely or partly 'about whom,' as opposed to being solely 'about what.' If the study is wholly 'about what,' it is not human subject research, and it does not require IRB review. In this qualitative research, interview as a tool seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in designing the Women's March according to the subjects. A standardized, open-ended interview approach is taken with event organizers. I ask about the subject's previous technical experience organizing protest events and their procedures in organizing the 2017 Women's March. See Appendix A for full list of interview questions.

- What were the deciding factors in choosing this particular route, mileage, streets?
- Were these destinations or the routes intended to be symbolic in any way?
- Were there particular considerations about choosing the beginning and ending locations?

The analysis of these dialogues provides insight into the design and planning of this historic protest event. In examining the interview data, I begin to extract common themes in the design and planning of a protest march. Common themes include route distance, route gradient for accessibility purposes, and the symbolic significance of the destination of the marches.

#### *IV. Significance and Limitations*

The significance of this research is to offer a better understanding of the interrelation of human behavior, public space and protest. While design in the 1960s and 1970s tended toward a “neo-military syntax of architecture” that discouraged mass gathering in public spaces, design can, instead, support the role of public protest in cities by being more aware of the symbolic and functional roles that urban landscapes play in creating theaters for public democracy (Davis, 226). There is no one way that these marches were executed, the destinations, routes, and architectural context all vary. However, amongst the differences in these marches are strong parallels. For one, five out of the six marches ended at a large open public park or plaza with some form or another of an architectural symbol of power and democracy. The research aims to provide a foundational framework from which to test and potentially support the role of landscape architecture in advocating democratic ideals in American cities.

Despite the aims of this research, there are limitations, for one, the time allotted for this research proves to be a limitation. It is likely that there are discrepancies in protest participant numbers city officials and news reports speculated. There are possible biases in the organizers’ experience of organizing the event. In addition, due to the time constraint, only 3 public officials from the cities of Seattle, Denver, and Austin were available for an interview. Interviews with participants would also provide additional perspectives into how these spaces are used during an occupation. There are a limited number of case studies, more case studies would provide additional context and foundation for this research. The choice of these 6 cities is a preliminary attempt at providing an even geographical representation of cities across the United States that demonstrated some of the largest protest participant numbers. The chosen 6 cities, however useful the research of these cities proves, does not provide enough context as an additional number of cities would.

## Six American Cities







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### I. Washington, D.C.

The first march of the 2017 Women's March to be planned in the United States was in Washington D.C., also known as the 'Women's March on Washington'. Close to 500,000 demonstrators occupied the National Mall, an iconic American spatial symbol of democracy, and expressed to the recently elected administration on their first day that 'women's rights are human right.' Several satellite or 'sister marches' took place in approximately 400 U.S. cities totaling 2.5 million protest participants (Women's March 2017). The Women's March on Washington was organized and planned by a handful of diverse women and national activists including co-presidents Tamika D. Mallory and Bob Bland and national co-chairs, Carmen Perez and Linda Sarsour. Two premier partners in its organization and ultimately its realization are Planned Parenthood and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Organizers received notice of its permit approval on December 15th 2016 (Hartocollis and Alcindor, 2017). Participants were scheduled for a 2-mile march beginning at the southwest corner of the Capitol building, continue down Independence Avenue and through the National Mall until reaching the White House. See Figure 4-1 for route map. It began at 10 A.M. and concluded around 5 P.M. Organizers estimated around 200,000 people would gather for the event, however according to photo analysis and city official statements, more than 500,000 people joined the Women's March on Washington (Hartocollis and Alcindor, 2017).

New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, and Denver also embraced some of largest masses of protesters during this historic. The choice of these 6 cities is a preliminary attempt at providing an even geographical representation of cities across the United States that demonstrated some of the largest protest participant numbers. These cities hosted anywhere between 50,000 to 500,000 participants in their respective civic and urban spaces. The beginning and ending points of the marches in these cities provide an opportunity to understand the relationship between the symbolic function of public urban space and the pragmatic constraints of moving thousands of people through city streets. Organizers of each of these six marches applied for and received permits from city officials to hold these marches. Local regulations and requirements for public demonstrations varied across these jurisdictions and evaluation of the permitting process is beyond the scope of this thesis.



-  Protest Location
-  View
-  Park/Plaza
-  March Start
-  March Procession
-  March End

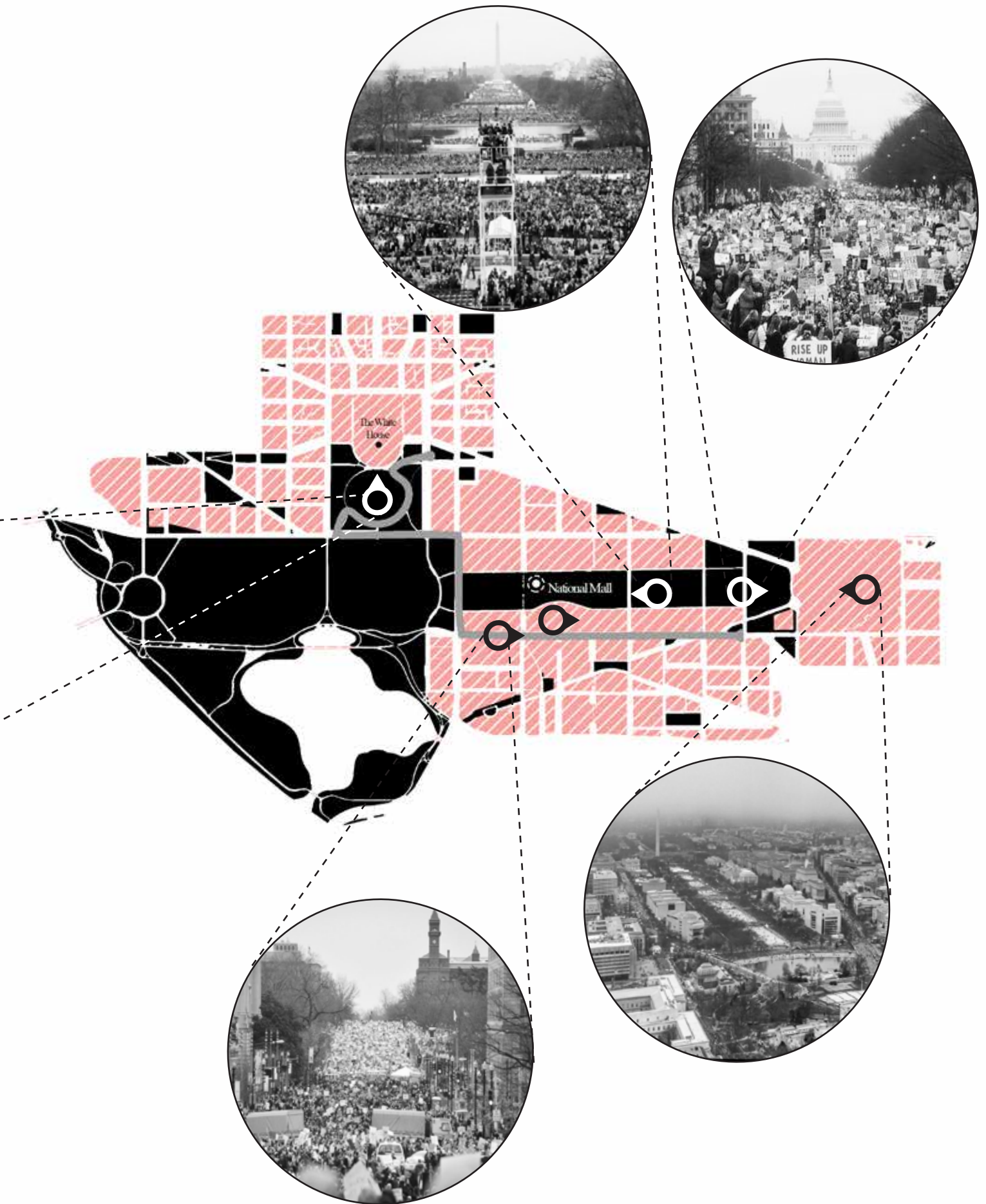


Figure 4-1 The March Route in Washington, D.C. Illustration by author.

## II. New York City, NY

Protesters in New York City used the Midtown landscape for their march. They rallied at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and traversed down 5th avenue until continuing their static demonstration in front of the Trump tower. Figure 4-2 illustrates the route taken by participants and is provided by the official Women's March website. In total, the procession was about 1.5-miles in length from beginning to end. The New York Times reports an estimated 400,000-500,000 marchers participated. The New York City march exhibits a unique situation in that the destination and focus of the occupation is a not a civic building surrounded by public landscape symbolizing state power, as most of the other sister marches exemplify. Rather it is a mixed-use skyscraper, home to the Trump Organization, an organization of the currently disputed president; it still a symbolic destination in its own right.



 Protest Location

 View

 Park/Plaza

 March Start

 March Procession

 March End

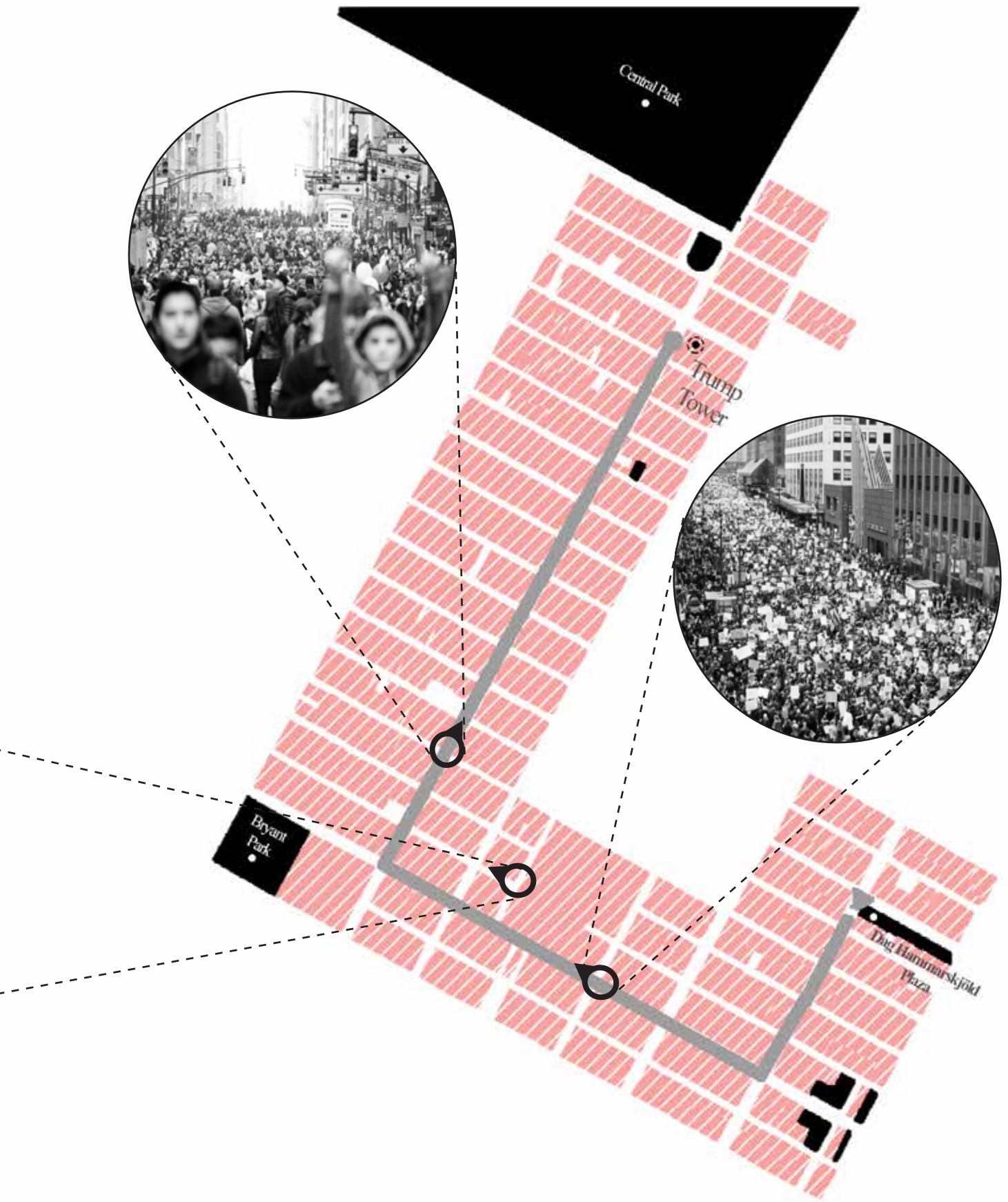


Figure 4-2 New York City 2017 Women's March Route Map. Illustration by author.

### III. Seattle, WA







The Seattle affiliate of the worldwide 2017 Women’s March route was the longest route of these 6 cities, stretching an impressive 3.5-mile distance. On the morning of January 21, marchers coalesced at Judkins Park, a multipurpose park corridor. It is six-block strip of green in the Central Area. From here, marches weaved Northwest through the urban fabric of the city, through the city center, and to the Seattle Center. The Seattle Center is an art, educational, tourism and entertainment center and home to the iconic Space Needle, a tourist destination that is an instantly recognizable visual symbol for the city. According to news reports the Seattle march drew an estimated 200,000 people onto its streets, filling up the entire 3.5-mile procession. Figure 4-3 provides an illustrative map of the route taken by participants in the Seattle Women’s March.

Liisa Spink, an organizer of Seattle’s 2017 Women’s March, provided insight into how this particular march was planned and designed, through an open-ended interview conducted on October 18th, 2018 (Spink, 2018). Liisa Spink has a background in theater, dance, arts administration and production and is currently the executive director for Dress for Success Seattle. She believes that women’s rights are human rights. Spink’s responsibilities while organizing this march included working with rally speakers and city officials, coordinating committees, and planning the route of the march. In designing the route, Spink and her team made sure the route was wheelchair accessible and of the flattest elevations. There were women positioned on ‘soap boxes’ along the route to continuously motivate marchers. She also notes that the route intentionally traversed through historically African American neighborhoods as a sign of inclusivity, encouraging all allies to participate.

In planning the beginning and destination points of the march, Spink reported that Judkins Park and the Seattle Center are the largest places nearest the city center that could hold the estimated number of people, most other places had hard barriers. Other federal buildings and their respective public spaces in downtown would have been too crowded. For this reason, Spink explains, the entire 3.5-mile march is meant to be symbolic as opposed to the occupation of a single public space. In this sense the streets of the march are the theater for public democracy; the entirety of the 3.5-miles was filled with demonstrators and allies to the march. Regarding the rallying point of the destination, the rally needed to be porous, which is one of the reasons why the Seattle Center was chosen as the destination.

According to Spink’s knowledge, 2-3 blocks around the Seattle Center contained the crowd that day. At the rally, there were bands playing, art and writing activities, and dancing in an effort to cultivate a vibrant feeling that “this is a movement, not just a onetime march” (Spink).



-  Protest Location
-  View
-  Park/Plaza
-  March Start
-  March Procession
-  March End



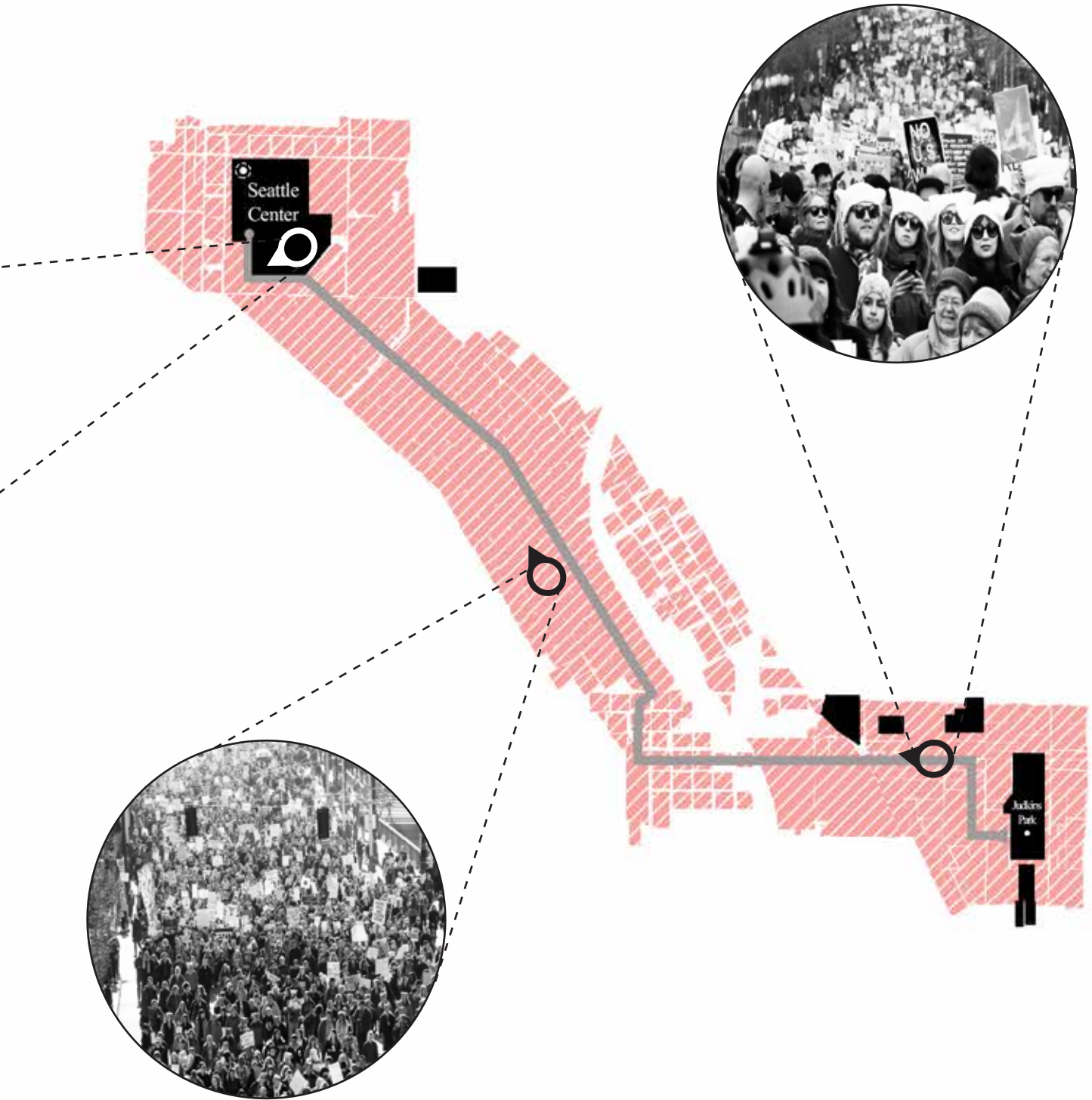








Figure 4-3 Saturday's route for Womxn's March on Seattle. Illustration by author.

#### IV. Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles Women's March began at Pershing Square, a small public park one block in size, roughly 5 acres, in downtown Los Angeles. Figure 4-4 depicts the route taken by marchers on Los Angeles. Marchers proceed Northeast on S. Hill St. before traversing Southeast onto E. 1st St. and rallying on the 2.4-acre public plaza in front of the Los Angeles City Hall building. It is estimated that about 100,000- 350,000 protesters marched and spilled onto S. Main Street where they gathered and chanted for the duration of the day (Chang et. al., 2017). The total procession distance, from Pershing Square to City hall was 1-mile in length.

-  Protest Location
-  View
-  Park/Plaza
-  March Start
-  March Procession
-  March End



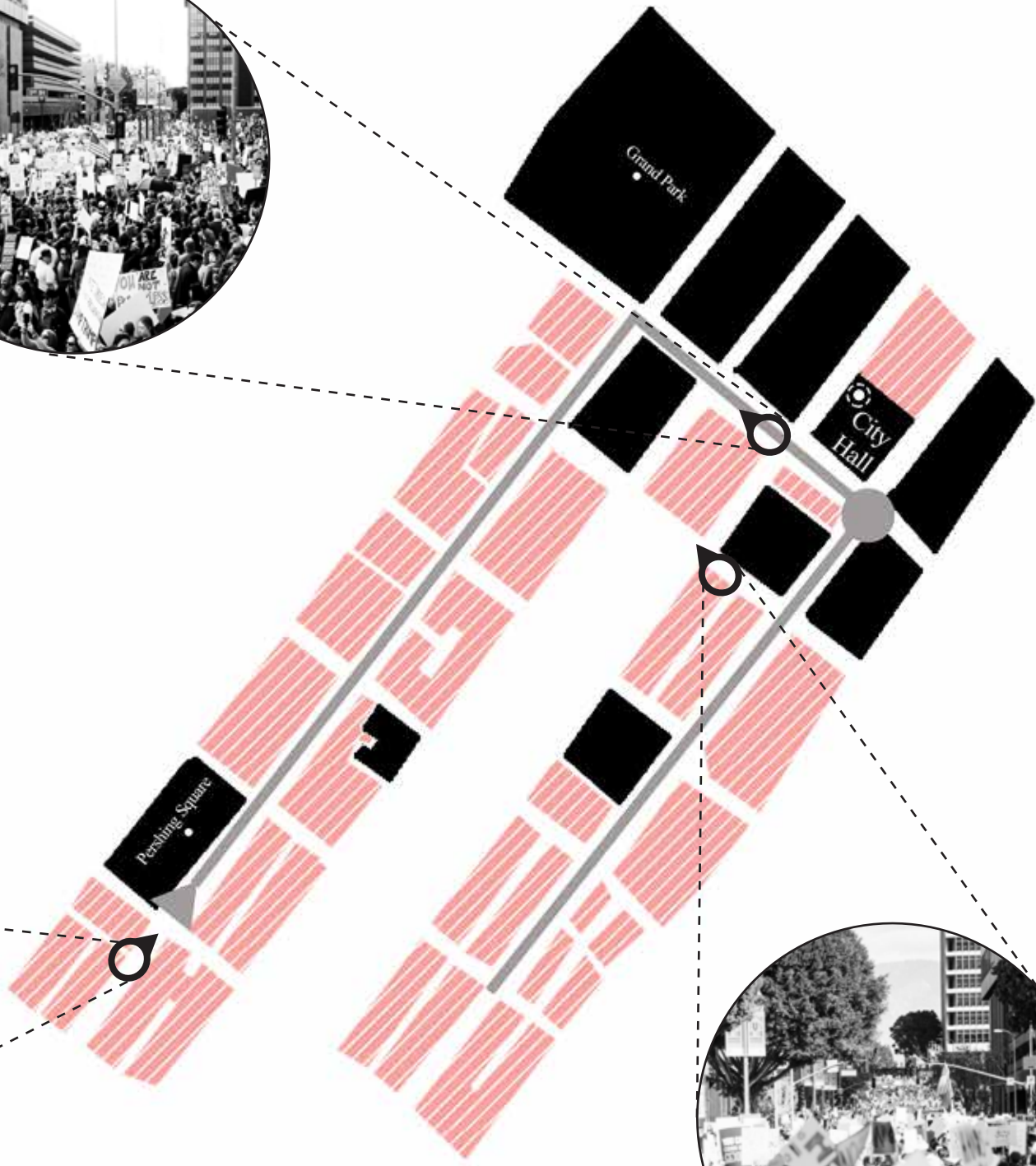


Figure 4-4 The Los Angeles Women's March will begin Saturday at 9am in Pershing Square and end at City Hall. The Event will last until 4pm. Illustration by author.







#### IV. Denver, CO

The march in Denver, Colorado featured Civic Center Park, a 16-acre park subjugated by government buildings, including the Colorado State Capitol and the Denver City Council building. Civic Center Park served as both the beginning and destination points of the march. As seen in Figure 4-5, protesters assembled at the Voorhies Memorial to the North before proceeding through the surrounding neighborhood and ultimately conjugating at the Greek Theater to the South of Civic Center Park. The procession totaled 2-miles, before ending at the Greek Theater as its focus for the rally. This landmark is positioned between the Colorado State Capitol building to the East and the Denver City Council building to the West. The Greek Theater provided a set of stairs that allowed speakers to address the crowd from an elevated position. It is estimated at between 150,000 and 180,000 people participated in Denver's 2017 Women's March.

Jessica Rogers is one of the organizers for the Denver 2017 Women's March. Rogers started organizing last year's March On movement 10 days after the presidential election. She worked with the national organization to create the identity March On and has continued building the movement with her co-organizers. The interview with Rogers, conducted on October 26th, 2018, provides insight into the design and planning of this historic event in Denver. Rogers responsibilities in organizing the march were to plan the route, coordinate security measures, and plan out resting and bathroom logistics along the route. She notes that the city provides 15 city blocks for free during any march, after that 2 paid officers must be at every intersection. Considering this, Rogers aimed at determined the most wheelchair accessible, flat, and cheapest route. An important element of the design of the route is its intentional circuitous nature. Rogers explains that bringing people back to the beginning point was a way of reiterating the overall message and re-motivating the participants. Additionally, the continual occupation of Civic Center Park, again subjugated by government buildings, as participants initiated and concluded their march, was an adamant message.

Rogers mentions a few discrepancies and rather serendipitous elements in the design and planning of the march. For one, the surrounding urban context is mostly commercial and not as heavily populated during the weekend; the march was held on a Saturday. An essential element to these protests is its visual opportunity, the

occupation of urban space by hundreds of thousands of people. In addition, there were concrete barriers, large street medians, and changing street widths on W. Colfax Ave. that 'bottle-necked' the crowds. Cheesman Park was considered as a rally point; however, it is prominently known in the community as an LGBTQ event space and the organizers did not want to distract from this. Additionally, it is further away from the city center and encompasses no civic or governmental buildings or landmarks. Interestingly, along the procession protesters cross under a thoroughfare at the Denver Pavilions that echoed and amplified the protesters chants, 'Show me what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like.'

-  Protest Location
-  View
-  Park/Plaza
-  March Start
-  March Procession
-  March End

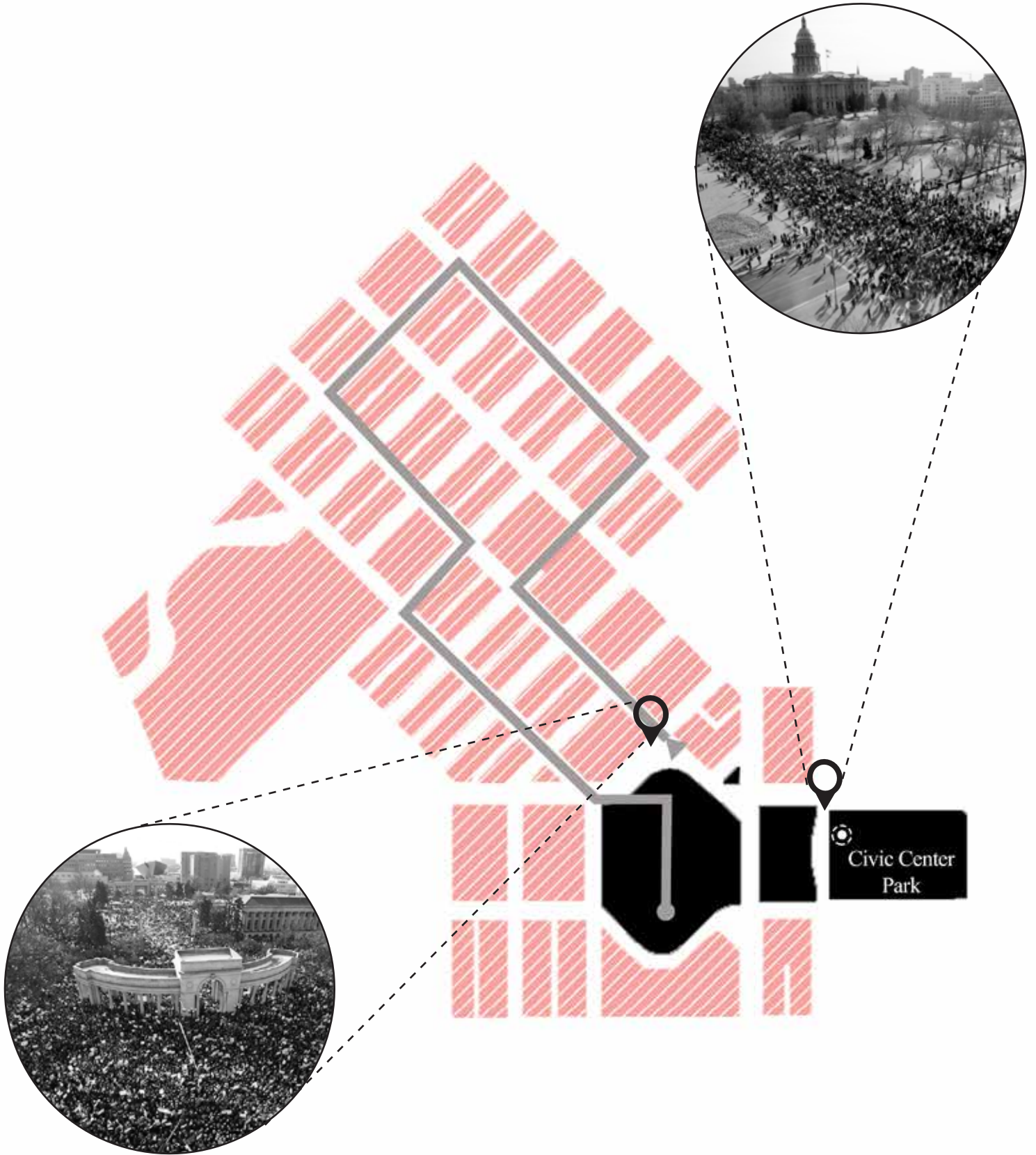


Figure 4-5 Main Denver March Route. Illustration by author.

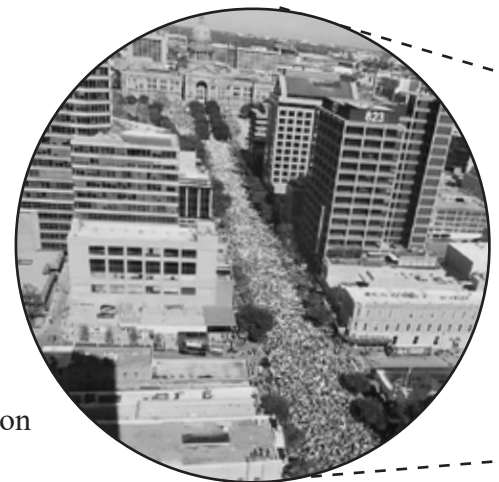
## VI. Austin, TX







Austin, Texas's 2017 Women's March was held at the grounds of the Texas State Capitol building, located on a hilltop overlooking downtown Austin. The Capitol building is surrounded by 22 acres of park grounds scattered with statues and monuments. As seen in Figure 4-6, marchers rallied at the south lawn of the capitol before marching south through downtown along Congress Avenue, across 6th Street, and then turning north bound back to the Capitol building along Lavaca Street. The procession was circuitous, similar to Denver, in that the beginning and end were the same destination. The entirety of the procession was 1-mile in length. On this day, the Texas State Capitol grounds embraced close to 60,000 protesters. The Texas State Capitol building served as the focal point for the protesters. The building is surrounded by axial approaches that lead visitors straight to the front steps of the Texas State Capitol.

Melissa Fiero is the Executive Director of the March On! Texas, the non-profit organization that planned the 2017 Women's March in Austin, Texas. I conducted my interview with Fiero on November 10th, 2018. Fiero and her colleagues, Sylvia Holmes, Beth Andre and Simone Laurent spent 50 days planning the march and spent up to \$45,000 doing so. Her team was charged with logistical efforts that included volunteer coordination, sponsor coordination, stage set up, and speaker coordination. Fiero states that she worked closely with the Capitol building historical staff. She was informed of the constraints the march would be confronted with in occupying the Texas State Capitol grounds. The building and surrounding sidewalks are constructed from local pink granite; tables, chairs, the stage, and any other equipment that was to be set up during the march had to be cushioned so as to avoid damaging the granite on site. The grounds staff had concerns for the lawn and ultimately fenced off certain areas that needed to be preserved from the large crowds expected. According to Fiero and her coordination with the Capitol staff, there could be nothing attached to the grounds or the building. She reiterates that this was a very serious matter for preserving the historical integrity of the Texas State Capitol.

In designing the route of the march, Fiero explains that the overall distance and slope elevations were the primary decision-making factors. Organizers consider the disabled and elderly when choosing to plan a 1-mile march as opposed to a 2-mile march. They decided that a 1-mile march was long enough to make a statement yet short enough so as to be manageable by most. Fiero states, that the picturesque perspective of marchers

marching downhill on Congress Ave. with the Capitol building in the background was a deliberately curated moment in time. Organizers aimed at providing the powerful image of protesters filling the streets in front of the central seat of government in Texas. While consulting the Austin Police Department, Fiero and her team made sure the police could provide what is called 'rolling closure.' This is a form of crowd control in which police and other security teams lead the march in order to close the streets ahead. Other officers then remain at the end of the march to reopen the streets for vehicular traffic. Coordination with the Department of Public Transportation was also considered in an effort to avoid impacting any of the public transit routes through downtown Austin. The march route primarily passed through office and retail businesses; Fiero and her team made contact with many of the businesses along the route to inform them of the event and apologize in advance for any possible disturbances in their business that day. Fiero, as well as most, were surprised by the number of participants who came out to support Women's Rights and explains that by the time the head of the march looped itself back to the Capitol grounds, thousands of other marchers were merely beginning their march.



-  Protest Location
-  View
-  Park/Plaza
-  March Start
-  March Procession
-  March End

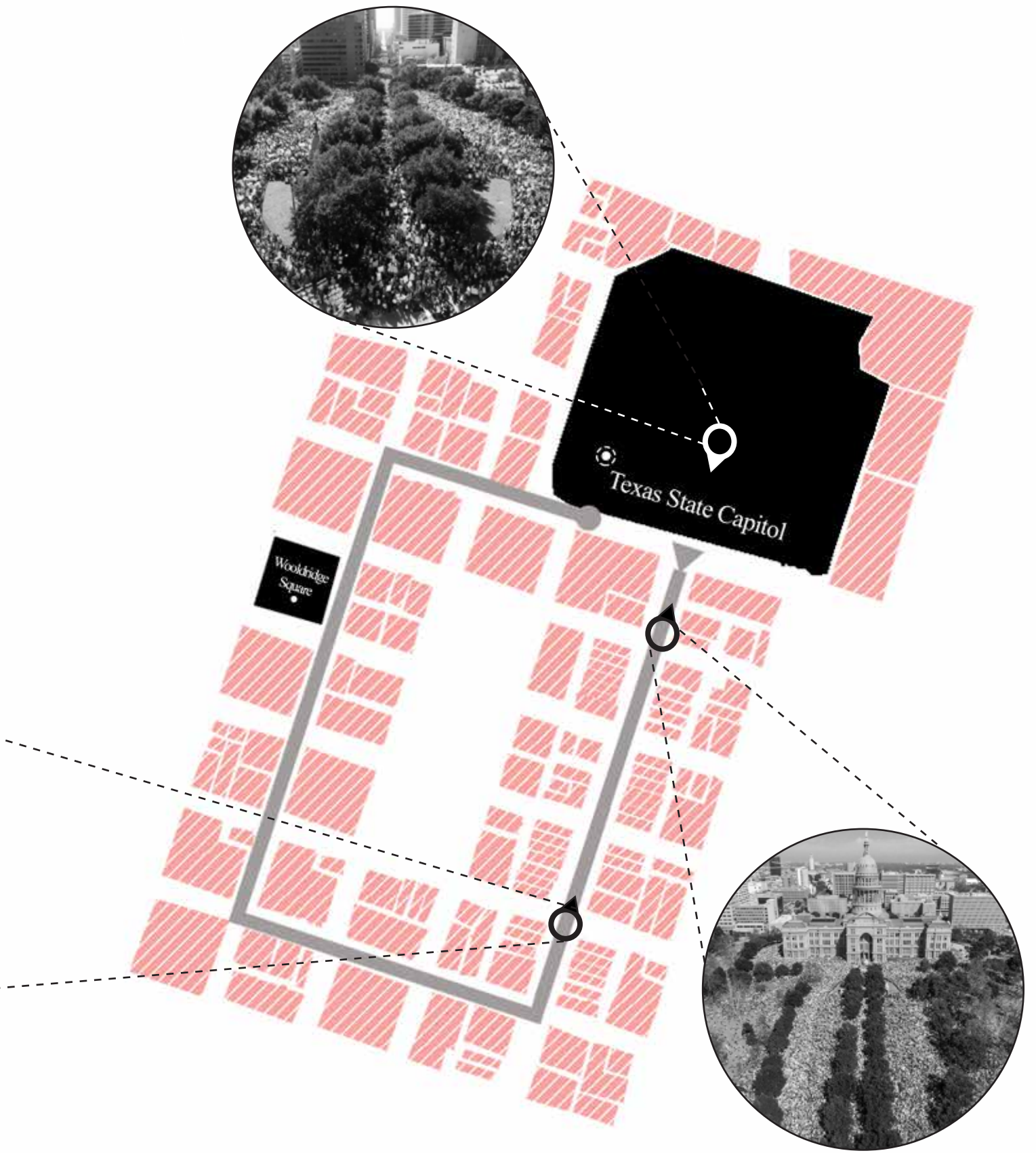


Figure 4-6 Austin March Route Map. Illustration by author.

## Spatial Dialogue

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### *I. Urban Procession*

In considering the design of protest events, one might assume a certain set of conditions, for example the focus of civic monuments and buildings within an appropriated public civic space. Are these conditions constant and/or required throughout all protest events? I look closely at the design of the route, mode of procession, space of gathering, edge of dissension, and focus of the occupation of the afore mentioned cities. The destinations, routes, and architectural context all vary. However, amongst the differences in these marches are strong parallels. For one, five out of the six marches end at a large open public park or plaza with some form or another of an architectural symbol of power and democracy. The research provides a foundational framework from which to test and potentially support the role of landscape architecture in advocating democratic ideals in America's cities.

Hatuka uses the literal definition of processions to refer to a "body of people going or marching along in orderly succession in a formal or ceremonial way, festive, occasion, or demonstration" (Oxford English Dictionary). Here, after studying the urban processions of these six cities, Figure 4-7 illustrates these six different processions, through the respective urban fabric. Comparatively, I observe and define 3 different types of procession: Consecutive, Orthogonal, and Circuitous. Participants of the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C. and Seattle optimize a more direct route between destination points and end points. These processions are defined here as 'Consecutive' processions, characteristic of the way in which the procession succeeds from beginning to end. Unique to the Seattle march, organizers deliberately executed one of the longest marches in comparison, reaching 3.5-miles from Judkins Park to Seattle Center. In this respect, the image of the fully occupied 3.5-mile procession becomes the core dimension of dissent. The procession of the New York City and Los Angeles marches are categorized here as an 'Orthogonal' procession. Rather than optimizing the most direct route from beginning to end, orthogonal processions weave in and out, usually perpendicularly, within the urban context between the destination and end points. A particularly unique mode of procession observed in this research is that of a 'Circuitous' procession. In Denver and Austin, marchers begin their route, parade through the surrounding urban fabric and then circle back to the beginning as the destination and gathering point. This proves unique in that the respective

urban space is continually occupied as a dimension of dissent. The average processions distance is about 1.8-miles, with Seattle's march at 3.5-miles as the longest and Los Angeles and Austin's march at 1-mile in distance as the shortest. In studying the procession of these marches, the comparisons provide perspectives into how people use, occupy, and proclaim themselves within urban spaces during times of civil unrest, when these spaces, and streets, may serve as platforms for realizing social change.

 March Start

 March Procession

 March End



WASHINGTON\_D.C.



CONSECUTIVE\_2 MILES

NEW YORK CITY\_NY



ORTHOGONAL\_1.5 MILES

SEATTLE\_WA



CONSECUTIVE\_3.5 MILES

LOS ANGELES\_CA



ORTHOGONAL\_1 MILE

DENVER\_CO



CIRCUITOUS\_2 MILES

AUSTIN\_TX



CIRCUITOUS\_1 MILE

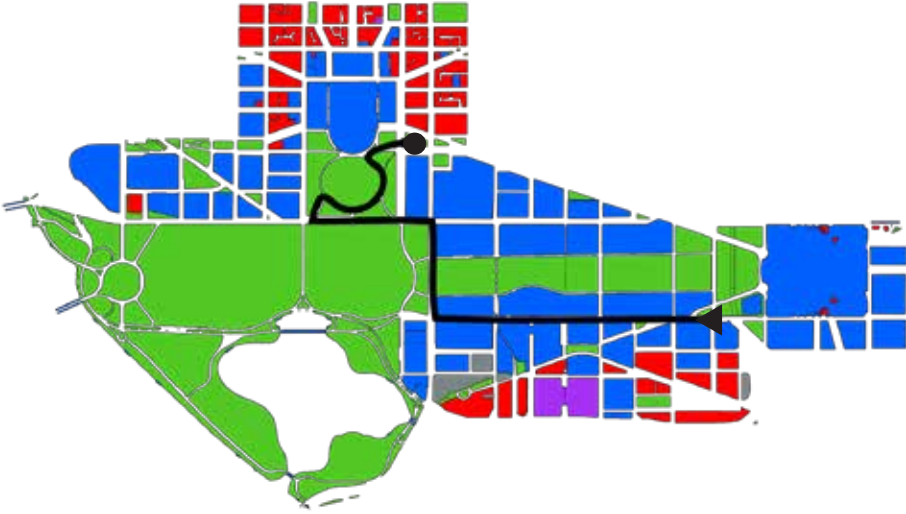
Figure 4-7 2017 Women's March routes. Illustration by author

*I. Urban Procession Cont.*

GIS mapping is used to visualize an additional dimension of dissent along the procession of the marches. City data including land use is collected to create an overlay of the land use patterns presented along the route edges of the marches in these cities. The series of land use maps visualize the relationship of the march to its surrounding urban context. Figure 4-8 illustrates the land use overlays created using GIS software. Land use patterns, when compared side by side, demonstrate a strong relationship between a predominately commercial/ mix-use areas and the procession executed through these districts and neighborhoods. The Seattle, Los Angeles, and Denver marches succeeded through prominently commercial/ mix-use areas; an average of 60% of the surrounding land use along these routes were of commercial/ mix-use land use. Land designated for 'office' use is also a common land use scheme among the routes demonstrated in New York City and Austin. There is one principal land use that proves essential and recurring among each march. Significant to the profession of landscape architecture, is the recurring use of large open/ public spaces, usually a park or plaza, as the destination and designated symbolically occupied space. Amongst the six American cities, an average of 84 acres of open/ public space is presented as a spatial platform for democratic performance. Almost off the marches both began and terminated at an open/ public space. The visualization of land use patterns along the routes provides context for characterizing the relationship between the physical structures shaping the urban procession, the architectural focus, and the space of gathering.

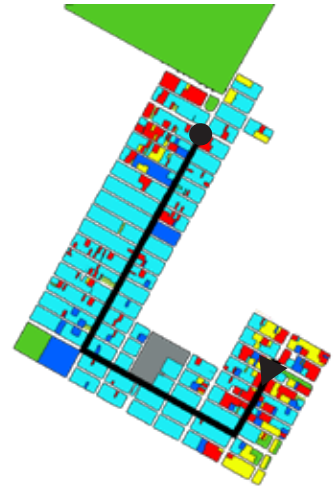


WASHINGTON\_D.C.



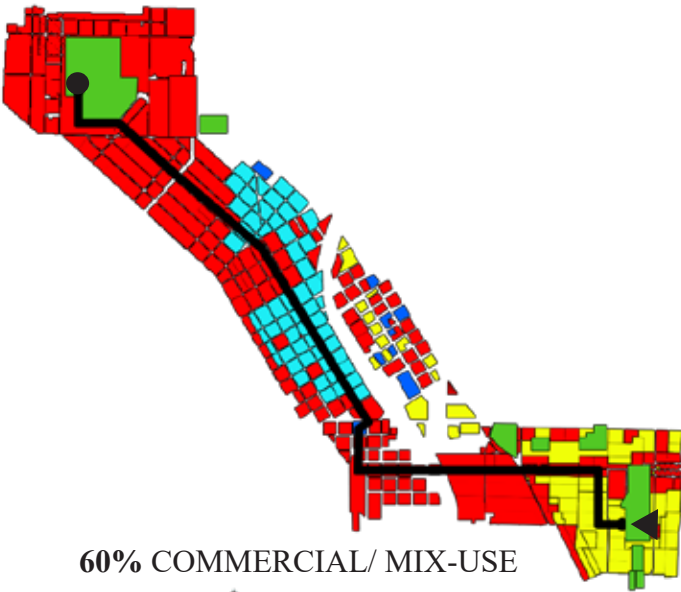
50% PUBLIC/OPEN SPACE

NEW YORK CITY\_NY



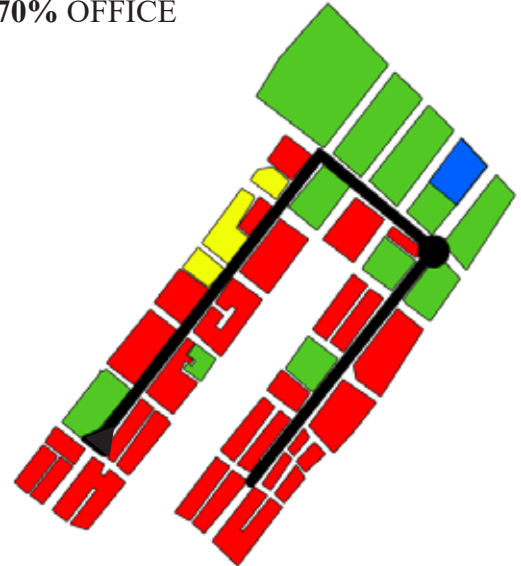
70% OFFICE

SEATTLE\_WA



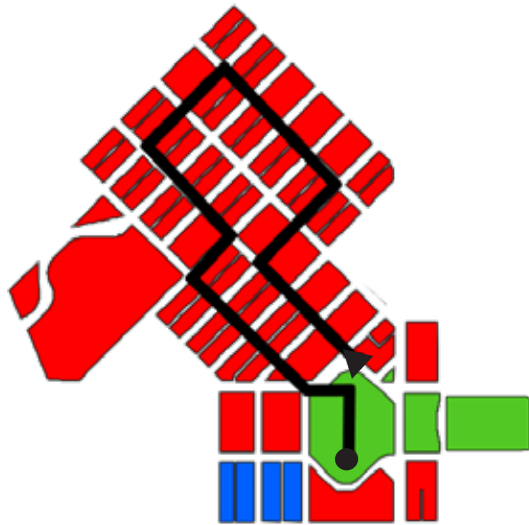
60% COMMERCIAL/ MIX-USE

LOS ANGELES\_CA



50% COMMERCIAL/ MIX-USE

DENVER\_CO



70% COMMERCIAL/ MIX-USE\*

AUSTIN\_TX



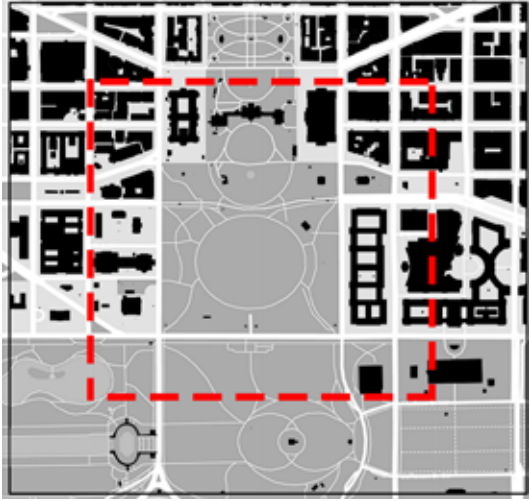
60% OFFICE\*

Figure 4-8 Land use patterns along the 2017 Women's March routes. Illustration by author

## *II. Space of Gathering*

Here I define the space of gathering as the destination, or terminus, of the routes of each march. Figure 4-9 delineates the space of gather chosen for the march in each city. After occupying the streets during the march, it is at these termini that the participants of the 2017 Women's March coalesce and proclaim themselves. As discovered previously, all 5 out of 6 of the marches terminated at an open/ public space. To no surprise and encouragingly fitting, the largest space of gathering amongst the six cities is that of the National Mall in Washington D.C. This 309-acre park is a spatial symbol of the socio-cultural system that is the cornerstone of America: democracy. Dotted with institutional and civic buildings, including the White House, home to the United States president, makes for the perfect stage from which to occupy. The cities of Los Angeles, Denver, and Austin share this similar intention of appropriation. The Los Angeles marchers end their route at the plaza in front of LA City Hall. Denver offers a large 16-acre Civic Center Park coagulated with civic buildings, including the Colorado State Capitol Building. Austin as well begins and concludes its 2017 Women's March at the 22-acre Texas Capitol grounds in downtown. Seattle's march did end at a large open space; however, Seattle Center is a commercial / entertainment park. The 74-acre park nonetheless provides protesters with the ample large open space, still representative of the city as it is home to the Space Needle, that was needed to rally as a destination. An exception is the space of gathering for the march in New York City; as most marchers were protesting the recent inauguration of current President Donald Trump, the march concluded at the Trump Tower which has no adjoining public space. Protesters occupied Fifth Avenue and the surrounding streets, closing streets and disrupting more businesses than would possibly be if they had gathered at a designated large open space. However, the dialogue of this performance would be lost had the marchers not descended upon the Trump Tower, a potent symbol for President Trump, whose election sparked the organization of the march. A year later, the New York Women's March was permitted to march in Central Park, rather than disrupting the busy commercial shopping district of Fifth Avenue in Midtown.

WASHINGTON\_D.C.



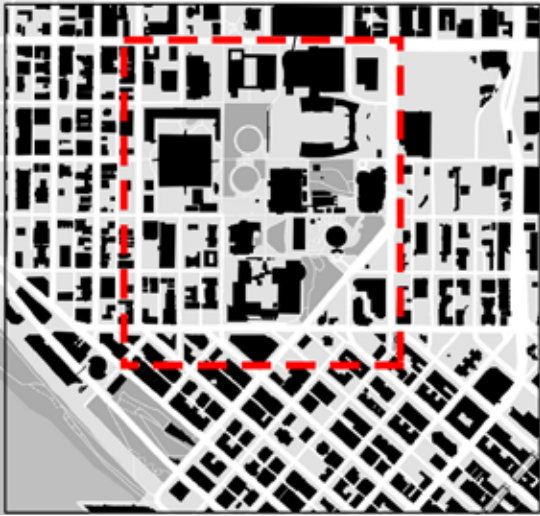
PARK/PLAZA 309.2 Acres\_National Mall

NEW YORK CITY\_NY



STREET 100ft Width\_Trump Tower

SEATTLE\_WA



PARK/PLAZA\* 74 Acres\_Seattle Center

LOS ANGELES\_CA



PARK/PLAZA 2.4 Acres\_LA City Hall

DENVER\_CO



PARK/PLAZA 16 Acres\_Civic Center Park

AUSTIN\_TX



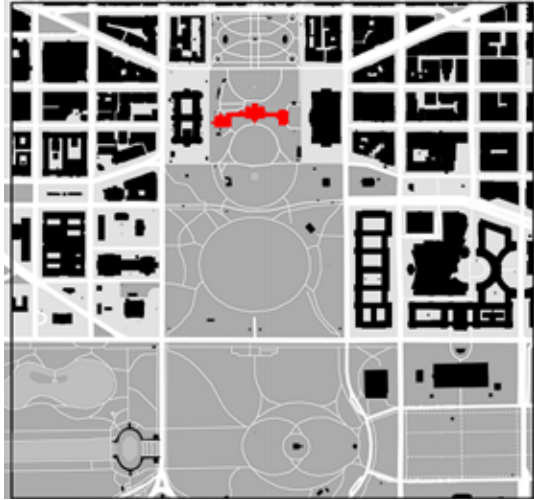
PARK/PLAZA 22 Acres\_Texas Capitol

Figure 4-9 The destinations of the 2017 Women's March where protesters gathered. Illustration

### *III. Focus of Occupation*

In most of these cities, the urban landscape embraces the architectural condition of governance and symbols of power. Often the architectural condition and symbols of power are government buildings and civic landmarks. At the terminus of every route is a destination, or space of gathering. Within these spaces of gathering and among the architectural condition, lies the focus of the occupation. Figure 4-10 highlights the architectural focus of each occupation. Half of the cities studied, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and Austin directly focus on civic buildings. Marchers in Washington D.C. march to the White House, marchers in Los Angeles march to City Hall building, while Austin marches to the Texas State Capitol building. Although the marchers in Denver are surrounded by symbolic and government buildings in Civic Center Park, the architectural focus is the Greek theater, according to photo analysis and interview data. Civic Center Park includes a Greek theater, offering a literal stage for which to proclaim one's right to the city with symbols of governance as an audience. As mentioned previously, the Trump Tower in New York City ultimately serves as the focus of this occupation as an opposition to Donald Trump's presidency. Lastly, the focus of Seattle's occupation is the Seattle Armory, a city landmark building. Often the architectural, landscape and other, symbols of power provide a stark contradiction to the image of masses in dissent occupying the landscape between.

WASHINGTON\_D.C.



CIVIC BUILDING\_The White House

NEW YORK CITY\_NY



MIX-USE SKYSCRAPER\_Trump

SEATTLE\_WA



LANDMARK\_Seattle Center Amory

LOS ANGELES\_CA



CIVIC BUILDING\_LA City Hall

DENVER\_CO



LANDMARK\_Greek Theater

AUSTIN\_TX



CIVIC BUILDING\_Texas Capitol

Figure 4-10 The architectural focus of each occupation. Illustration by authorby author.

#### *IV. Edge of Dissension*

Figure 4-11 graphically represents the approximate density and edge of dissension. I define edge of dissension as the boundary or limits of the thousands of participants as they are shaped by the urban landscape around them. Using photo analysis and Jacobs' crowd-counting technique mentioned in Chapter 3 page 25, this research estimates and graphically portrays the edge of dissension during the 2017 Women's March in these six American cities. In this graphic, the lighter color represents the least dense portion of the occupation, at 1 person per 10 square feet, while the darkest color portrays the densest crowds, at 1 person per 2.5 square feet. Most often in these occupations, the densest portions of the crowd clusters closest to the 'focus' of the occupation. The spaces that offer the most open space such as, Washington D.C. Seattle, Denver, and Austin, contain the densest masses within the boundary of the park or plaza. However, with such large numbers, between 500,000 and 60,000 between these four cities, crowds ultimately spill on the streets and maintain a medium density on the perpendicular streets closest to the focus seated in the 'space of gathering'. The City Hall plaza in Los Angeles proved too small to hold an almost entire occupation of approximately 200,000 participants; they fill up the surrounding parallel street. While in New York City, the only open space to occupy in front of the Trump Tower are the streets. For this reason, the edges of dissension emulate the gridiron formation of New York City's urban fabric.

Through these comparisons, one is able to initially understand how the built environment might shape a collective group. The built form in this case, act as an intervention to a free forming crowd; the negative spaces to the built form, the streets and parks, become a celebration, an avenue for political choreography and spatial communication. The location of a focus, be it a civic building or landmark, to an occupation is correlated to the density patterns illustrated in Figure 4-11.

 1 PERSON/ 2.5 SQ-FT

 1 PERSON/ 4.5 SQ-FT

 1 PERSON/ 10 SQ-FT



WASHINGTON\_D.C.



500,000- 600,000 PARTICIPANTS

NEW YORK CITY\_NY



400,000- 500,000 PARTICIPANTS

SEATTLE\_WA



100,000- 200,000 PARTICIPANTS

LOS ANGELES\_CA



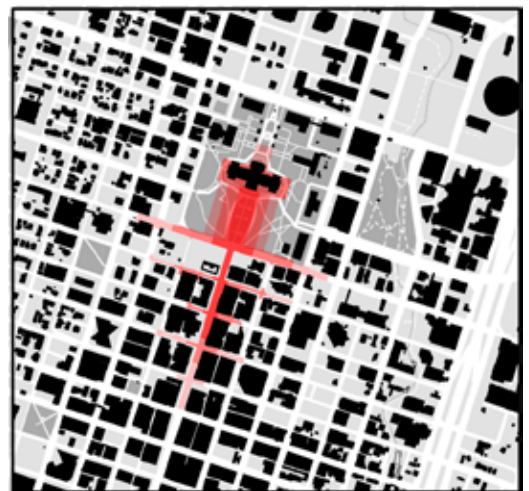
100,000- 350,000 PARTICIPANTS

DENVER\_CO



150,000- 180,000 PARTICIPANTS

AUSTIN\_TX



50,000- 60,000 PARTICIPANTS

Figure 4-11 graphically represents the approximate density and edge of dissension

## *V. Synthesis*

Upon a closer look at the data collected for each of the Women's Marches in Washington D.C., New York City, Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, and Austin, I synthesize five core dimensions of dissent in this research: (1) the Procession through the urban landscape of the city itself. Three different modes of procession are observed: Consecutive, Orthogonal, and Circuitous. An understanding of the modes of procession during this protest event helps define civic engagement as contact with the physical, material and temporal nature of public space. The urban procession of hundreds of thousands of people offers a dynamic visual opportunity for city-dwellers to grasp the intensity of dissent. When all else fails, not enough open space that is, there are streets to occupy; the procession becomes a temporal space itself for democratic performance.

A second dimension of dissent observed in this research is that of (2) the Land Use patterns along the Procession. The series of land use maps visualize the relationship of the march to its surrounding urban context. Significant to the profession of landscape architecture, is the recurring use of large open/ public spaces, usually a park or plaza near the city center, as the destination and symbolically occupied space. Of the six Women's Marches, five marches not only began at a park or plaza but also concluded at a park as the space of gathering for rallying. These parks are home to government and civic buildings, those of which offer a symbolic projection of state and federal power. Additionally, through the analysis of the land use maps, one finds a strong correlation between Commercial/Mix-use and Office use, predominately found at or near the city center, and the chosen procession route. These land use patterns found at or near the city center relate to the existing systems of economic and social power within the city. The routes were designed to proceed through these centers specifically so that the occupation of the streets may become an avenue for communication amongst the existing urban fabric of power systems.

The (3) Space of Gathering is the third dimension of dissent discussed in this research. As discovered previously in the analysis of land use patterns along the procession, 5 out of 6 of the marches terminated at an open/ public space. These spaces often embrace long axial approaches and are dotted with institutional and civic buildings. The spaces support a degree of symbolic projection, whether iconography, monuments, large scale government buildings, and/or design quality. Symbolic projections can be powerful codes of public culture, both summarizing cultural trends as well as shaping

public opinion (Amin, 2006). Mostly commonly during the appropriation of these spaces, lies a (4) Focus of the Occupation. A Focus, usually an architectural projection of power, is the fourth dimension of dissent. The foci of these occupations, whether it be The White House, Texas State Capitol building or a Greek Theater, are symbolic and sensory expressions of the trends and moods of public culture manifested in these spaces of gathering. While it might be expected that the focal point for a public protest would embody the protested power or entity, these six cities suggest a more complicated picture. The focal point, may or may not be symbolic – for examples Seattle's Armory building as opposed to a government building in downtown. In addition, the focal points may or may not provide some functional purpose – for examples, Denver's Greek Theater that provided a speaking platform for organizers to address crowds.

Lastly, I define the fifth dimension of dissent in this research as, (5) the Edge of Dissension. The Edge of dissension is defined as the boundary or limits of the hundreds of thousands of participants as they are shaped by the urban landscape around them and drawn to these spaces projecting symbolic power. The location of an architectural focus, a civic building or landmark, in the event of an occupation is indirectly correlated to the crowd density patterns of appropriation. Crowd density increases as the distance between the crowd and the Focus of Occupation decreases. The crowds are drawn to these 'symbolic projections' of power as the dense occupation of the spaces embracing the foci provides a stark contradiction between power and people.



## Dimensions of Dissent

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### *I. Conclusion & Discussions*

This research examines the destination and routes taken by participants in the 2017 Women's March to better understand the role landscape architecture and urban design play in supporting and advocating for the ideals of public democracy during times of civil unrest. The 2017 Women's March was the largest single-day protest in U.S. history with approximately 2.5 million participants. The cities which embraced some of the largest numbers of participants during this historic protest event include, but are not limited to, Washington D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, and Denver. At the start of this thesis, the aim is to ask and answer the following questions:

-In considering the design of protest events, one might assume a certain set of conditions, for example the focus of civic monuments and buildings within an appropriated public civic space. However, are these conditions constant and required throughout all protest events?

-How do the landscapes of the 2017 Women's March in the United States embrace the potential for socio-political spatial dialogue within the urban context of 21st century cities?

-Do the marches focus on similar destinations – either civic spaces or civic buildings with public space around them? If so, what can landscape architects learn about the importance of providing ample public space in civic and neighborhood design?

-Are the civic spaces utilized for large scale permitted protests and marches adequate for the purpose? Are they large enough, accessible enough, visible enough?

The research leads to the conclusion that within the urban context of the six 21st century American cities studied, the urban landscapes do in fact embrace the potential for socio-political spatial dialogue. Paradoxically, these findings indicate that there is no one type of landscape, no single kind of focal point, and no particular type of route that is most effective in supporting public, permitted peaceful demonstration. Providing ample open space from which to practice freedom of assembly and freedom of speech is as much a dimension of dissent as dissent is a dimension of democracy. These spaces hold true to three virtues, they are (1) physical, (2) political, and (3) psychological

in their symbolism and location. Most commonly, the marches ended at an open/ public space near the city center that offered a contradicting architectural condition embraced in civic landscape. These parks are home to government and civic buildings, those of which symbolize state and federal power. Of the six Women's Marches, five marches not only began at a park or plaza but also concluded at a park as the space of gathering for rallying. From park to park participants marched. At a minimum these cities provide its citizens with ample, open, and accessible space from which to practice the right to assembly. In supporting the American socio-cultural system of democracy, protest organizers and marchers are offered these large open parks as spatial platforms. In these spatial platforms, a political choreography is performed with an architectural symbol of governance as the watchful audience.

The foci of these occupations, whether it be The White House, Texas State Capitol building or a Greek Theater, are symbolic and sensory expressions of the trends and moods of public culture manifested in these spaces of gathering. The significance of an architectural focus, a civic building or landmark, in the event of an occupation is correlated to the crowd density patterns of appropriation. The built form in these cases, act as an intervention to a free forming crowd. The negative spaces to the built form, the streets and parks, become a celebration, an avenue for political choreography and spatial communication.

In looking at the edge of dissension in particular, it appears possible that large public spaces being too small for the number of protesters offers a powerful image of an overflowing democracy peacefully pushing beyond the designed boundaries of the public square. These images are potentially more powerful than images of crowds easily accommodated in a large public space. However, there is potential then that too large of an open public space could diminish the integrity of the appropriation when crowds do not appear to be fully occupying the space. This suggests questions for further research - does the image of overflow from parks and plazas into adjoining streets create a more powerful image than a public space that neatly accommodates a crowd? The graphic representation of the 'edges of dissension' allow for an initial understanding of how the built environment might shape a collective group, specifically one democratically participating in the occupation of space.

An argument is made that not only is the space and focus of an occupation significant, but also the procession; such is the case with the Seattle march as explained previously. The urban procession of hundreds of thousands of people offers a dynamic visual opportunity for city-dwellers to grasp the intensity of dissent. March organizers considered three attributes when designing the route of the march. First, the mode of procession was considered. Three different modes of procession are observed: Consecutive, Orthogonal, and Circuitous. Second, the distance in miles is taken into consideration. Organizers are charged with providing a reasonable marching distance, one that does not exacerbate the actual march, distracting from the overall message, while also maintain a spatial dialogue with the surround urban context. The land use patterns found at or near the city center and along the march route, predominately Commercial/Mix-use and Office use, relate to the existing systems of economic and social power within the city. The routes were designed to proceed through these centers specifically so that the occupation of the streets may become an avenue for communication amongst the existing urban fabric of power systems. When all else fails, not enough open space that is, there are streets to occupy. Thirdly, organizers paid close attention to the elevations along the route. Of the 3 organizers interviewed, each spoke to the inclusion of the elderly and wheelchair users when assessing the routes for difficult terrain. An understanding of the modes of procession during this protest event helps define civic engagement as contact with the physical, material and temporal nature of public space.

Each march responded to local conditions in the urban landscape. While each could be said to take place in a “downtown,” looking more carefully at routes and destinations suggests many variations on the theme. While marchers in New York City did not gather at an open space or park, they did occupy several of the surrounding streets to Trump Tower. Additionally, while Seattle marchers did not gather at or near ‘downtown’ where government buildings are located, march organizers did deliberately design the route to pass through. Ultimately, it seems that urban landscapes provide more flexibility than we might initially assume in their ability to accommodate large-scale public protests. Flexibilities are found in the walkability of procession distances, the space of gathering -- whether a park, plaza, or the streets -- and the kinds of focal points -- whether symbolic or functional.

Organizers generally plan protest for two reasons: first, an external purpose in which protesters confront an issue directly, strengthening the impression of their political message; and second, an internal purpose in which

protesters assemble, intensifying an emotional and political harmony among participants. Striving to achieve these goals, organizers take into account several interrelated urban elements: symbolic architectural focus, number of participants, location of rally, procession distance, and procession elevations. The elements contribute to the physical and cultural implications and meanings of an event. I conclude that in the context of this contemporary protest, the 2017 Women’s March, two linked landscapes matter: the procession through the city, offering visual opportunity for remote viewers and media coverage, and the spatial form of gathering, both the crowds and the space occupied. There are many overarching similarities or dimensions to the design of these protests, however each event proves unique in its ability to adapt in the respective urban landscapes provided. Each city offers a unique urban fabric met at the intersection of local geography, cultural history, and economic influences from which to design a democratic performance.

## *II. Parks & Open Space as a Democratic System*

Once we agree that public space is necessary in a democratic society, the question then becomes, how should our public spaces function? When discussing public spaces, it is easy to construct a clear dichotomy between public spaces and private spaces. When considering space for political protest, it is useful to prescribe some dimensions of its own. Public Spaces could have one or more of the following features making it an ideal place for protest: (1) it is openly accessible; (2) it consumes collective resources meaning it is owned by the public sector; (3) it has a common impact. These dimensions allow for a stage for the performance of public roles (Parkinson, 201). Every public space should not have to perform every public role. However, when understanding the role landscape architecture and urban design play in supporting and advocating for the ideals of public democracy during times of civil unrest, it is important to look at the degree to which a city provides space for a variety of experiences and performances of democratic process. As seen in this research, context plays a large role in what makes a designed protest successful in any given place. There may not be one right way to design a democratic public space or a protest at that matter, but by learning and experimenting, testing assumptions, and responding, and by putting the citizen or users in the center of the process, we are performing democratically.

 Park/Open Space

 March Start

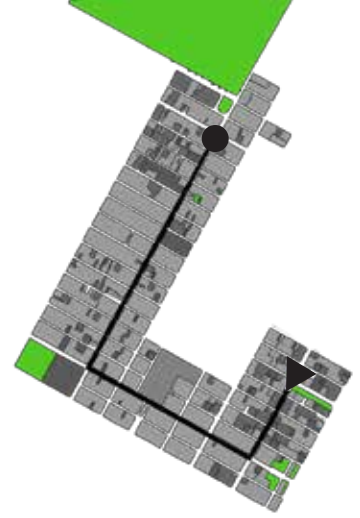
 March Procession

 March End

WASHINGTON\_D.C.



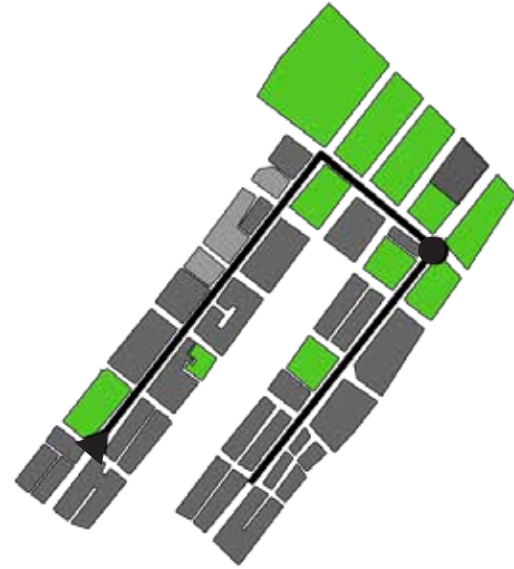
NEW YORK CITY\_NY



SEATTLE\_WA



LOS ANGELES\_CA



DENVER\_CO



AUSTIN\_TX

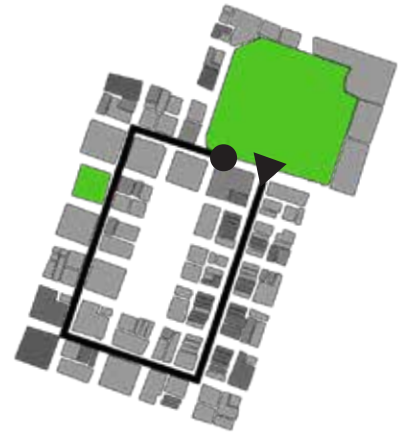


Figure 5-1 Parks and open space as a democratic system. Illustration by author.

### *III. Design and Democracy: Relevancy to Landscape Architecture*

Reviewing relevant literature during preliminary research for this thesis provides the researcher as well as the reader with an understanding of events and concepts surrounding the premise of this paper: protest and urban landscapes. A brief description of America's first protest is provided in order to set the stage for the democratic ideals of America's birth. This expresses the importance of power being invested in the people and protest participation as the corner stone of American democracy. This is a call to action and activism, imploring designers and citizens alike to better understand the implications our built environment has on us. This research is a framework for a broader understanding of the intricacies of our socio-cultural systems. We can and should expand our knowledge about the ways we live and can live amongst buildings, landscapes, and cities and understand that our environments are products of choice.

The synthesis of these six marches provides an avenue for reflection on how contemporary forms of dissent are changing the way we, especially designers, perceive public space and its politics. After taking a closer look at the mode of procession, space of gathering, focus, of occupation, and edge of dissension it is essential, as citizens of democracy with the right to the city, that cities provide ample open spaces for which to use even during times of civil unrest. These spaces are scattered with static symbols of ruling power from which to provide contrast against the looming masses of dissident citizens. Those charged with the privilege of designing urban landscapes can benefit from this synthesis as an understanding of the significance of providing citizens ample open space, whether park, plaza, or street, to utilize at any dimension, including dissent. Design can support the role of public protest in cities by being more aware of the symbolic and functional roles that urban landscapes play in creating theaters for public democracy. The discussion of the landscapes of protest is crucial to the continual advocacy of the democratic ideals of American culture within the design profession.

Places are not just vessels for social life, but themselves social enablers, things we make together. The design profession focuses primarily on the economic and environmental sustainability of our cities, but we must think deeply and critically about social sustainability. "Social sustainability", defined by Woodcraft, "combines the design of the physical realm with the design of the social world" (Woodcraft et al., 2012). Landscape architects excel at envisioning alternative futures; how can these skills be used as a political act? It is time we as landscape architects, planners, and

urban designers build upon our design insight by first understanding how our urban landscapes frame political opposition when participating directly in our democratic cities. Our role as designers is not just as genius creatives, but as mediators and facilitators between the professional world and actual everyday users. This is an opportunity for advocacy in landscape architecture now as we deal with an increase in occurrence of political protest events around the world, and an increase in population and urbanization.



#### *IV. Further Research*

This analysis provides perspectives on how people use and occupy urban spaces for democratic peaceful protest when these spaces may serve as platforms for realizing social change. Figure-ground and land use maps are created and utilized to reconstruct the spatial context and dimension of the occupation in each city. Graphic illustrations are developed that highlight the space of gathering, edge of dissension, and focus of the occupation. A standardized, open-ended interview approach is taken with event organizers to better understand the discussion making process in planning these protests. The analysis of the spatial framework for these planned protests suggest ways for landscape architects to understand and advocate for the relationship between designed public space and the ideals of public democracy, and democratic speech. This study also invites a number of questions for future research:

-How often or ever are design decisions made considering potential political demonstrations?

-Aside from offering ample open space from which to practice one's freedom of assembly, are there specific landscape architectural design elements that's can enhance the impact of a large-scale peaceful occupation?

-How much flexibility exists in the permitting process to allow organizers to choose routes, destinations, and focal points?

-Does a specific land use scheme and date/time of a political procession have any implications on the support of a protest?

-There are large open spaces in many cities, however, how does the dimension of proprietorship (public or private) impact a society's democratic ideals? Is the privatization of public space an unavoidable trend?

-What would our cities look like without these large civic spaces? Where would citizens gather as an act of civil disobedience?

-Would mass occupation of a space be as symbolic without some kind of architectural symbol of power?

-Why aren't physical structured occupied to the same intensity as outdoor spaces?

-Should there be a designated march route in democratic cities that offers wider street widths, can be closed down

easily without disturbing too many businesses, yet offers visual opportunities of occupation from surrounding areas/buildings? This current research could offer a set of guidelines.

-What kind of worlds and societies do we want to shape for future generations and how might they be represented within the urban fabric?

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