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# Women Have an Important Opportunity to Unite as a Diverse Coalition

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# Introduction

From July 26th to August 20, 2021, Data for Progress, on behalf of the Women’s March, conducted a survey of the Women’s March membership list and an identical survey among a national sample of women. The survey included questions regarding gender and racial identity, racial attitudes, political efficacy, and news and social media consumption, among other topics.

Overall, while we find substantial differences between members of the Women’s March and women nationally on these topics, both groups display a sense of connectedness towards other women, suggesting this is an important identity that can mobilize women to be more politically engaged. Key findings from the survey are highlighted below.

## Political Cohesion by Gender and Race

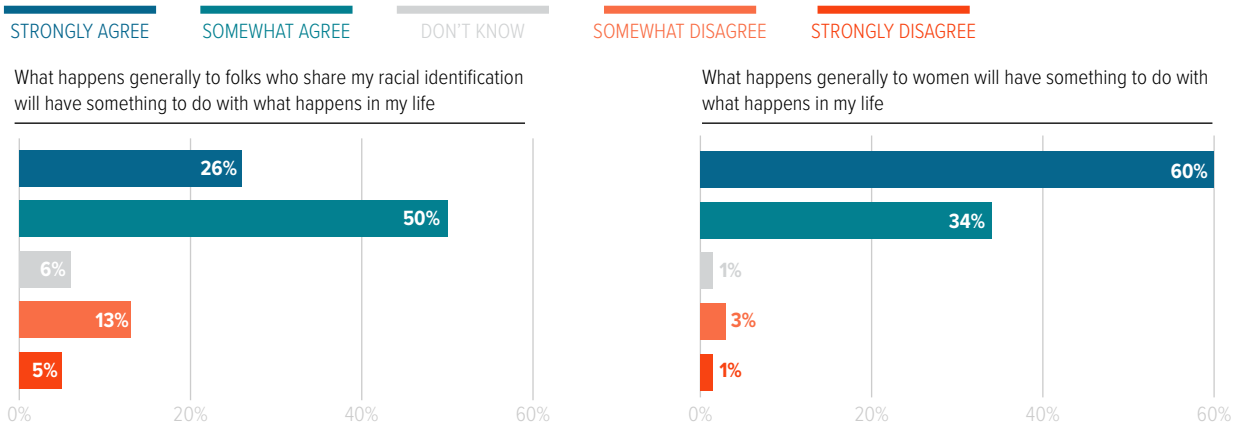
To examine how connected Women’s March members and women nationally feel to other women, we used a concept known as “linked fate.” Originally pioneered by political scientist Michael Dawson as a way to examine racial political cohesion among Black Americans, linked fate is a measure of how connected Black Americans feel to each other, and how strongly they view their own success as tied to the success of their race. This concept has been extended by academics and researchers to other racial and ethnic groups.

In our survey, we adapted this measure to examine attitudes towards gender identity as well as racial identity using the following items: 1) “what happens generally to women will have something to do with what happens in my life” and 2) “what happens generally to folks who share my racial identification will have something to do with what happens in my life.”

First, among members of the Women’s March, we find that members feel incredibly high levels of connectedness towards women as an in-group. Ninety-four percent of members agree that what happens to women will have something to do with what happens in their own lives. When looking at racial identity cohesion, we find overwhelming — though lower — consensus: 76 percent of Women’s March members feel connected to others through their racial identification.

### Women’s March Members Feel Highly Connected to Others by Gender and Race

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



July 26–August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women’s March.

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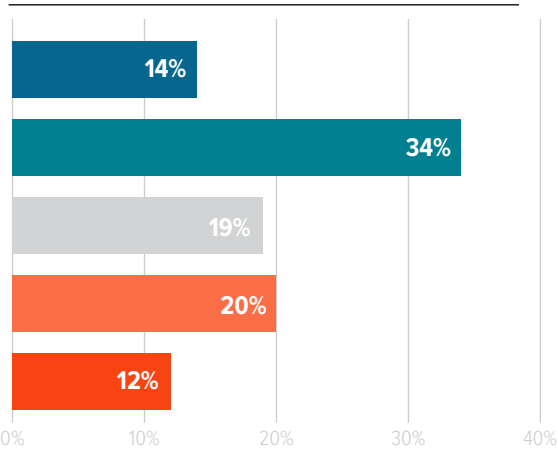
Among our national sample, we find that gender group cohesion is once again more salient than race, though both in-group categories saw significantly lower levels of cohesion than the Women’s March sample. Among women nationally, a majority express a sense of linked fate towards other women by a +42-point margin, while a much lower +16-point margin majority express a linked fate towards people who share their racial identification.

### Nationally, Women Express High Levels of Connection with Other Women

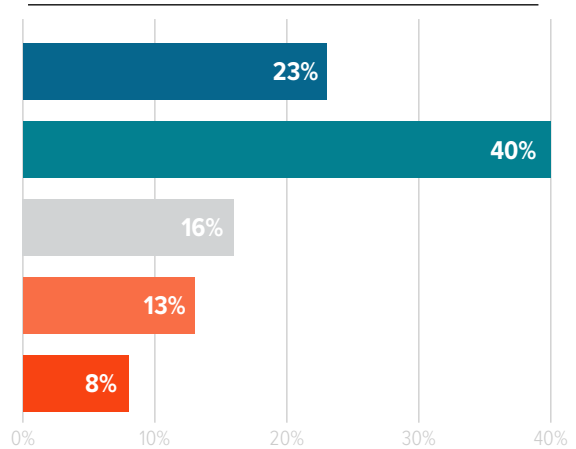
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

STRONGLY AGREE    SOMEWHAT AGREE    DON'T KNOW    SOMEWHAT DISAGREE    STRONGLY DISAGREE

What happens generally to folks who share my racial identification will have something to do with what happens in my life



What happens generally to women will have something to do with what happens in my life



July 26–August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

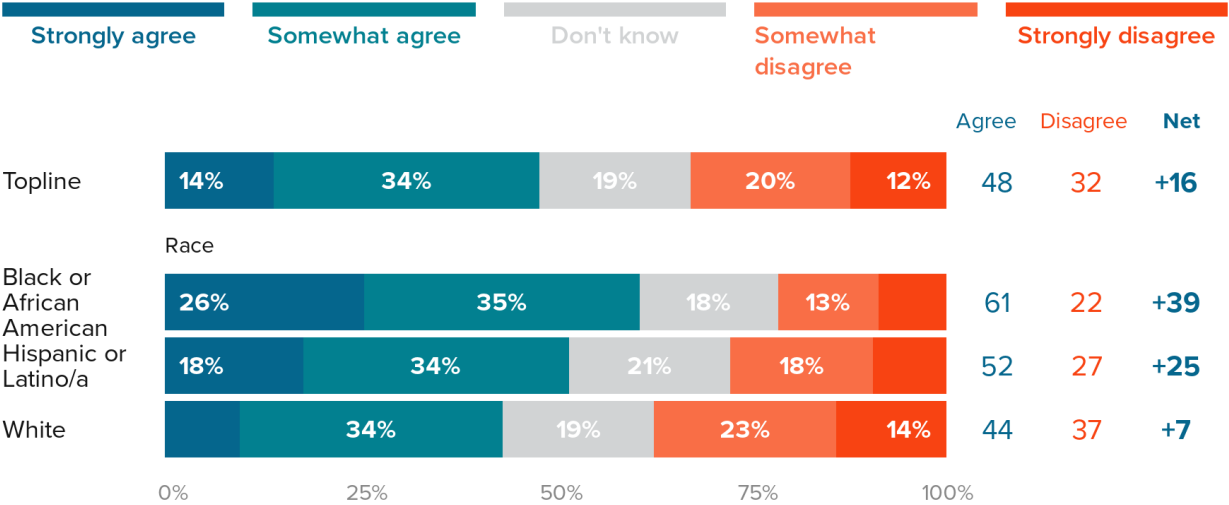
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At the same time, we find variation in levels of linked fate by race when we look across racial identification. Black women, for example, express notable levels of linked fate towards other Black people by a +39 point margin. A majority of Latina women also express similar sentiments by a +25 point margin. In contrast, only a plurality of white women by a +7 point margin express a sense of connectedness towards others of their same racial identification.

## Black and Latina Women Display Higher Levels of Racial Linked Fate Compared to White Women

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

What happens generally to folks who share my racial identification will have something to do with what happens in my life.



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

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The national results align with research [by Pew](#): political cohesion by racial identity is strong among Black Americans but can be expected to be less unifying for other races. The findings suggest that the consensus around gender linked fate may be particularly important for mobilization.

## Racial Attitudes

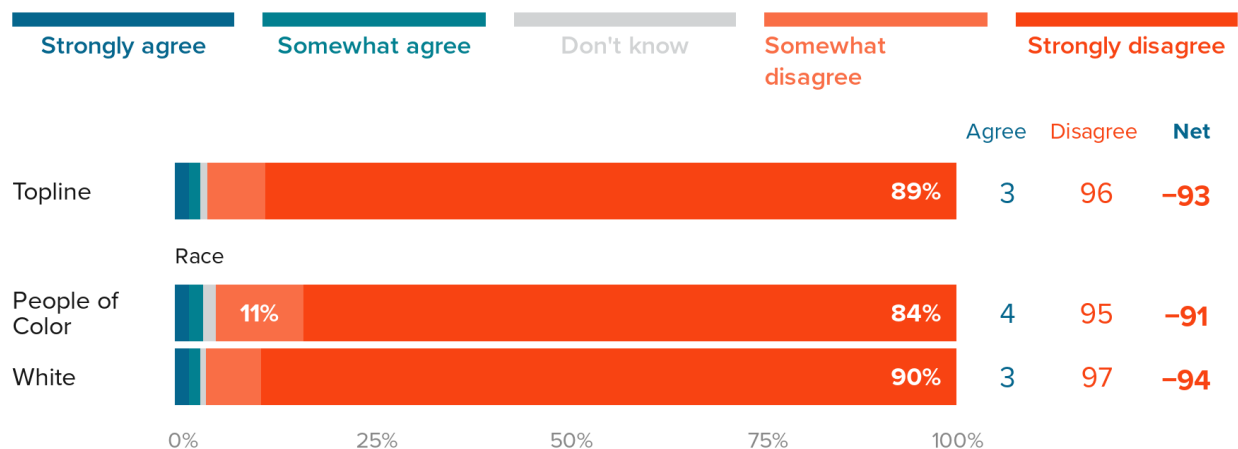
In addition to questions regarding individual's own racial identity, we also examined women's perceptions of racial discrimination and privilege in today's society.

We find that Women's March members are largely unified in their views on racial issues. They nearly universally reject the conservative talking point that white people now face just as much or more discrimination than racial minorities (96 percent disagree that white people face the same or more discrimination, while only 3 percent agree). There is also consensus among members across racial categories, with white members (97 percent) and members of color (95 percent) about equally likely to disagree that white people face the same amount or more discrimination.

### Women's March Members Strongly Disagree That White Americans Face More Discrimination Than People of Color

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Today white people face the same amount of discrimination, if not more, than Blacks, Latinos or other racial minorities."



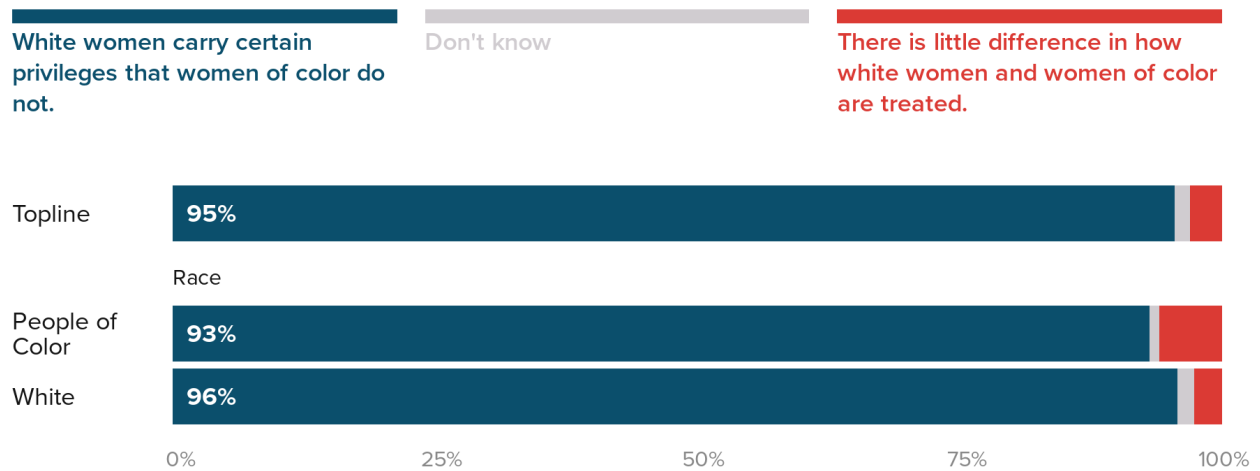
July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women's [IFBCC](#) March.

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Members are also overwhelmingly united in acknowledging that white women experience privileges that women of color do not. Ninety-five percent endorse this view compared to only three percent who believe there is little difference in how white women and women of color are treated. Notably, white members are just as likely to perceive that white women carry privilege as are members of color.

## Women's March Organization Members Acknowledge That White Women Have Privileges Not Afforded to Women of Color

Which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women's tFfBCc March.

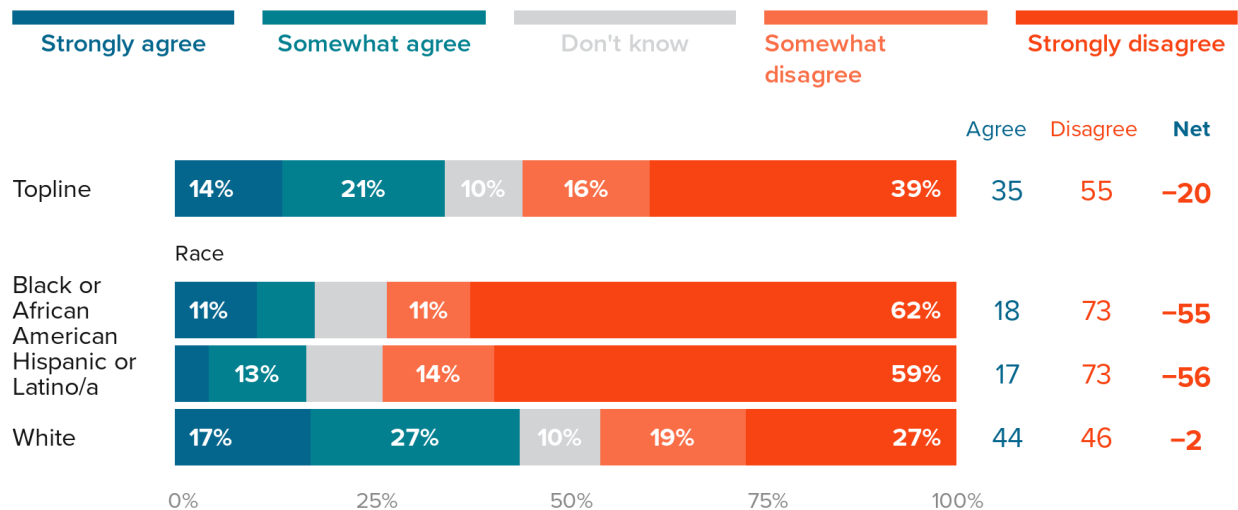
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Among women nationally, on the other hand, there are sizable differences in beliefs between white women and women of color. By a 20-point margin, women overall tend to disagree that white people face the same or more discrimination than racial minorities (55 percent disagree, 35 percent agree). However, while nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of both Black and Latina women disagree with the idea that white women face more discrimination than minorities, white women are split in their views. Forty-four percent of white women agreed with the idea that white women face more discrimination than traditionally marginalized minorities, while 46 percent disagreed. This difference is likely closely tied to political partisanship, with Republican women being the only group where a majority *agreed* white people face more discrimination than racial minorities (65 percent agree compared to only 31 percent of Independents and 21 percent of Democrats).

## Women Disagree With the Idea That White People Face More Discrimination Than Minorities

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Today white people face the same amount of discrimination, if not more, than Blacks, Latinos or other racial minorities."



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

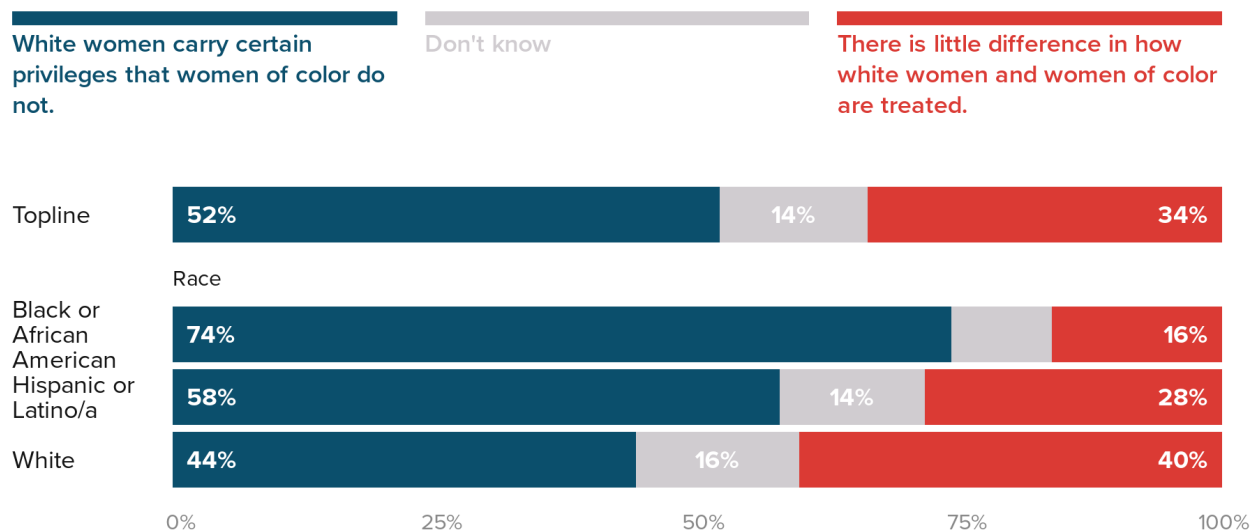
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A similar pattern is reflected in attitudes about privilege. Overall, just over half of women nationally (52 percent) acknowledge that white women carry privileges women of color do not, while only a third (34 percent) believe white women and women of color are treated about equally. Black women are most likely to see white privilege (74 percent), followed by Latina women (58 percent). Again, white women are more divided, with 44 percent expressing awareness of white privilege while 40 percent say there is little difference in how women of different races are treated.

## Women Agree That White Women Have Privileges Not Afforded to Women of Color

Which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

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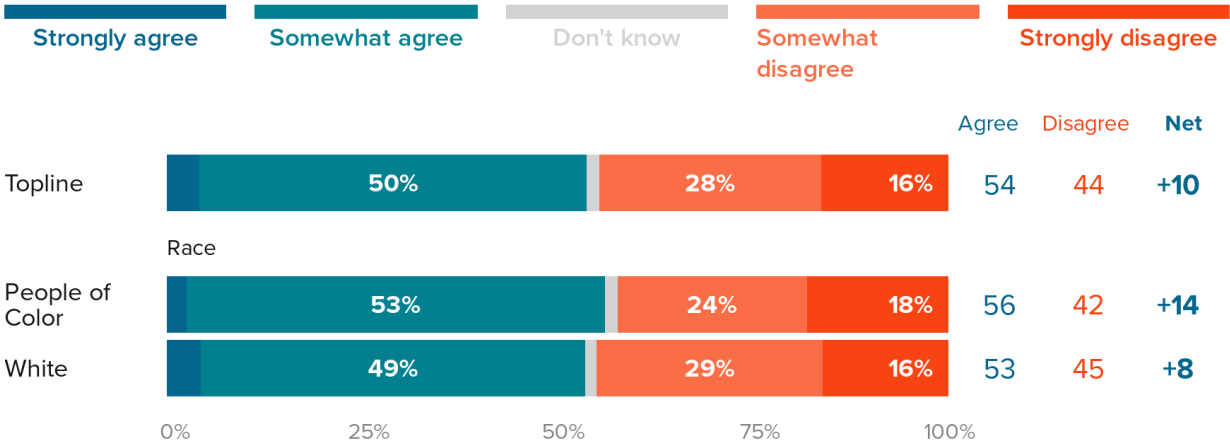
While appealing to women in terms of their gender identity can bring women together across racial divisions, these results highlight the importance of taking into account intersecting identities and the lived experiences of women of color. Notably, within the Women’s March community, even members who don’t identify as women of color themselves widely acknowledge that these experiences are marked by the persistence of racial discrimination and inequality — an awareness that extends to only a portion of white women nationally.

## Efficacy

We asked respondents in both populations to rate their perceived political self-efficacy — the feeling that an individual can bring about change — by indicating their agreement with the statement “Public officials and politicians care what people like me think.” Here we find that Women’s March members are far more optimistic than are women nationally that their views matter to elected officials. By a +10-point margin, members of the Women’s March organization agree that public officials and politicians care what people like them think. In contrast, women nationally show greater disaffection, disagreeing that their opinions matter to politicians by a 23-point margin.

### Women's March Members Agree That Politicians Care About Their Opinions

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
Public officials and politicians care what people like me think.



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women’s tFBCc March.

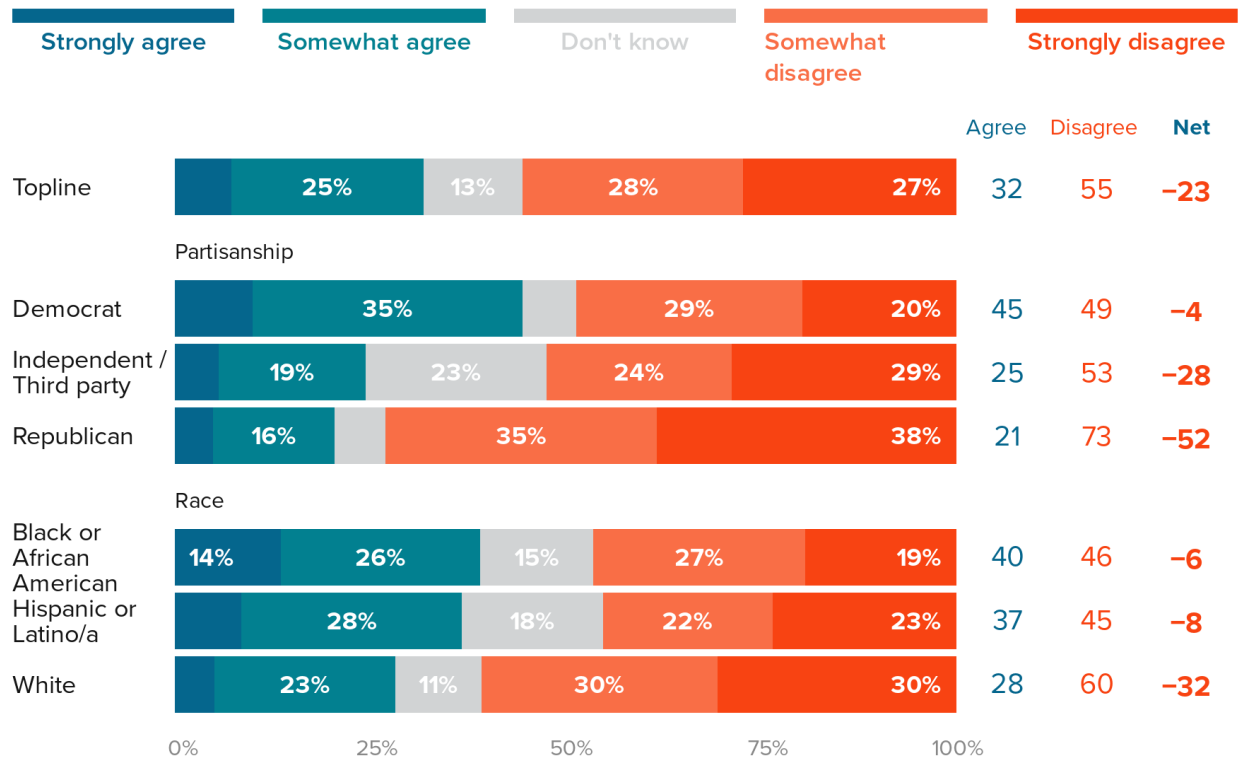
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Underlying this topline-level difference are partisan and racial differences among women nationally that may be reflective of right-wing discourse that the government doesn't care about "regular people." Democrats are relatively divided, with 45 percent agreeing politicians care about the views of people like them, and 49 percent disagreeing. Among independents, however, political self-efficacy is much lower — women disagree by a 28-point margin. Among Republicans, it is an even starker 52-point margin, with 38 percent *strongly* disagreeing that politicians listen to the opinions of people like them.

Political self-efficacy also varies by race. Among Black and Latina women, cynicism that their views don't matter to politicians wins out, but by single-digit margins. Among white women, on the other hand, cynicism is more rampant, with those who disagree that politicians care about their opinions outnumbering those who agree by a 32-point margin. Similarly, among Women's March members, we see that optimism that their views matter to politicians is higher among members of color (+14-point margin) than among white members (+8-point margin).

## A Majority of Women Disagree That Politicians Care About Their Opinions

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
Public officials and politicians care what people like me think.



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

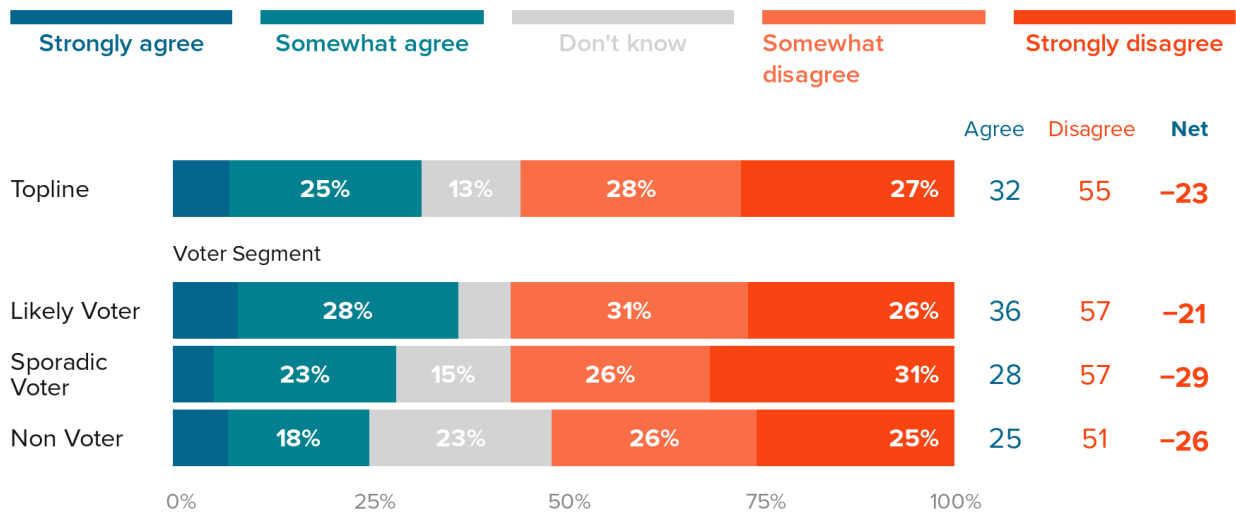
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Notably, political efficacy does not differ all that much by voting status, suggesting many voters participate in spite of their cynicism. Likely voters disagree that politicians care what people like them think by a 21-point margin, compared to 29- and 26-point margins among sporadic voters and non-voters, respectively.

## Nationally, Likely Voters Still Engage in Politics Despite Feeling That They’re Not Heard by Politicians

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
Public officials and politicians care what people like me think.



July 26 - August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.

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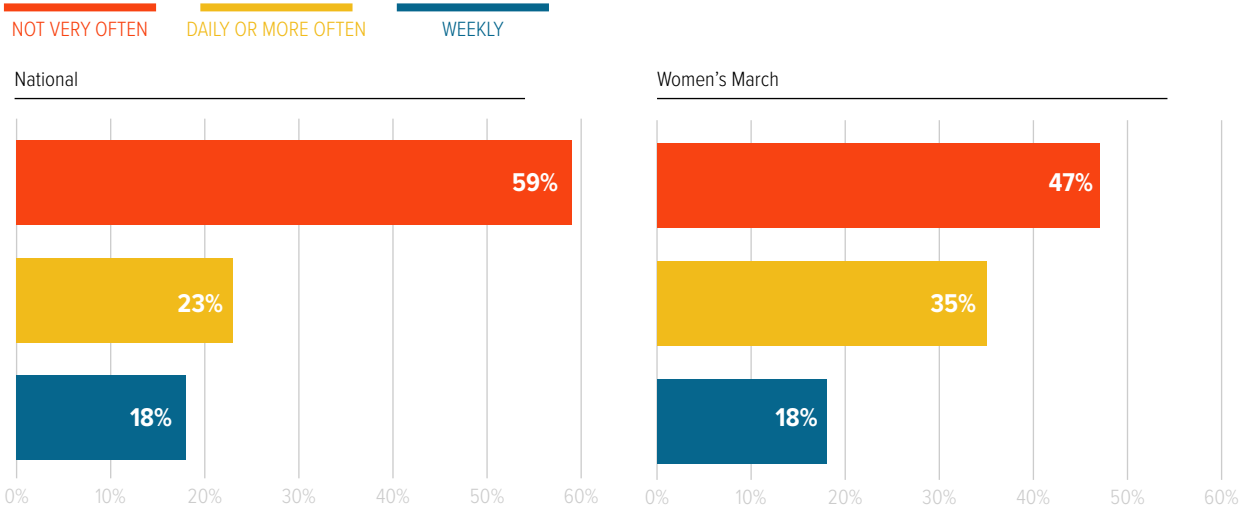
The contrast in efficacy between women nationally and Women’s March members is stark: women nationally do not feel heard by the people that represent them, while Women’s March members are far more likely to believe that their voices matter and hold power. While Women’s March members may already have a higher sense of efficacy prior to joining the organization, the results suggest that movements and organizations are important resources. In particular, being a part of an organization fighting for women’s rights alongside having a strong sense of connection to other women could both provide a greater hope of making an impact politically, and bolster the political power of women organizing into a bloc around a shared purpose.

# News Consumption and Social Networks

Lastly, we examined news and social media consumption. First, we asked respondents how often they used social networking sites as news sources in the past 30 days. We see that the majority of women nationally do not seek out social media as a news source very often (59 percent, including “never” and “less often” responses), while about a quarter (23 percent) of women refer to social sites daily or multiple times a day. In comparison, Women’s March members much more frequently consume news from social media sites, with more than a third of members reporting using social media daily or more (35 percent). Members of the Women’s March and women nationally are equally likely to use social sites weekly (18 percent). In the case that women do look to social media for news, women in both samples are more likely to refer to these sites daily or more, rather than weekly.

## Nationally, Women Are Less Likely to Use Social Networking Sites for News

In the past 30 days, how often have you used the social networking sites you are a part of to get news about government, politics or current events?



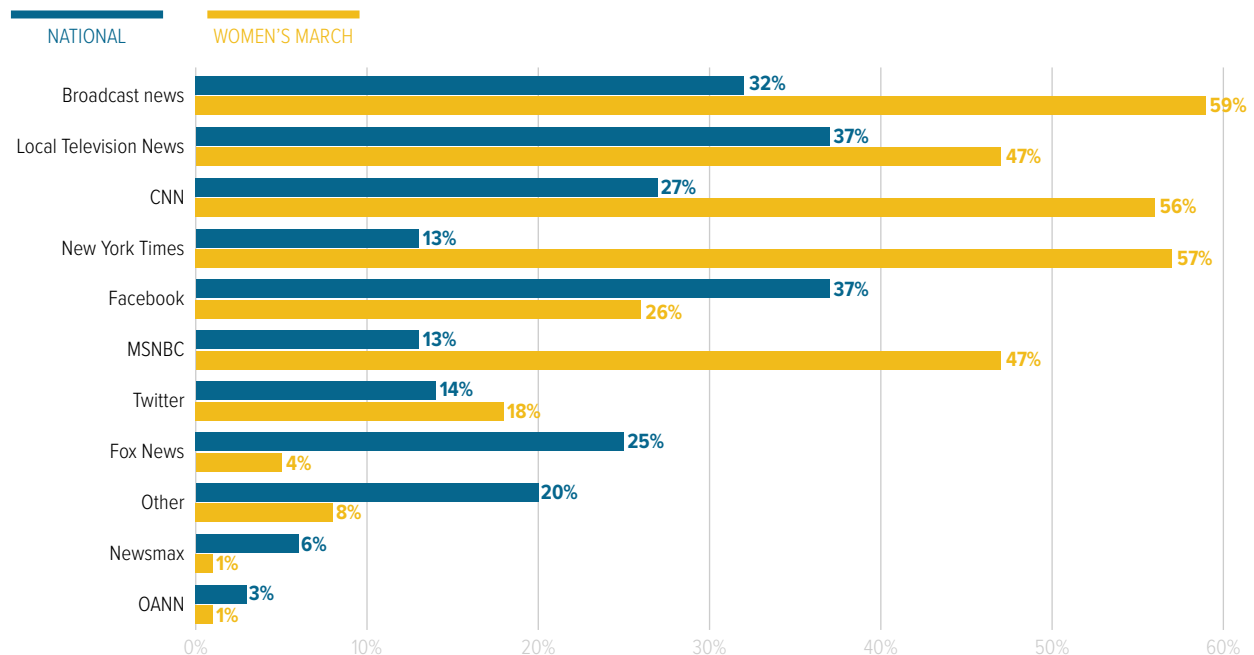
*July 26–August 10, 2021 survey of 1,534 women nationally.  
 July 26–August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women's March.  
 \*The responses "Never" and "Less often" were summed to calculate "Not very often"  
 "Daily" and "More than once a day" were summed to calculate "Daily or more often"*

We next asked respondents to select which sources they used for news on government and politics. When we specifically list the different sources, we see a much different breakdown of social media usage for women nationally and Women’s March members. Although women nationally are less likely to use social networking sites for news very often, we see that Facebook is tied with local television news as their most common source for news (37 percent). In contrast, Women’s March members are less likely to receive news from Facebook (26 percent). The use of Twitter for news is more similar across samples, with 18 percent of Women’s March members and 14 percent of women nationally selecting Twitter as one of their sources for news on government and politics.

Women’s March members refer to traditional news sources at much higher rates. The New York Times (57 percent) and broadcast television news (59 percent) rank highest for information on government and politics. Members also watch CNN (56 percent), MSNBC (47 percent), and local television news (47 percent). A smaller portion of women nationally refer to similar sources: 32 percent watch broadcast news, 27 percent watch CNN, and 25 percent report watching Fox News. Although members of the Women’s March frequently refer to social networking sites, we find that members of the Women’s March engage in a wider diversity of news sources compared to women nationally.

### Women’s March Members More Likely to Refer to Traditional News Sources

Please select all of the sources of news that you have gotten news from about government and politics in the last week.



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 July 26–August 10, 2021 survey of 1,111 members from the Women’s March.  
 \*The responses ‘Never’ and ‘Less often’ were summed to calculate ‘Not very often’  
 ‘Daily’ and ‘More than once a day’ were summed to calculate ‘Daily or more often’

Women nationally, in contrast, are more likely to use platforms like Facebook and also do not associate these sites as sources to get news about politics, even if they are exposed to it as active users. This potentially puts women nationally in a position where they're more vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation on social media. At the same time, social media may also be a useful tool to mitigate misinformation, and to organize and mobilize women.

## Conclusion

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Taken together, we see that, compared to women nationally, Women's March members share a greater sense of cohesion with other women, show smaller differences in their views about race based on racial identification, and are more optimistic that politicians care about the opinions of people like them. Among women nationally, on the other hand, there are signs that racial identification and political partisanship contribute to bigger attitudinal differences. These are important gaps that need to be addressed in mobilizing women as a political bloc — from the differences in understanding structural racism to the social media resources that could be used to increase political interest and engagement.

While we are limited in our analysis by not taking an intersectional approach to gender and racial identities, we find that regardless of attitudinal differences, most women share the belief that what happens to women more broadly has an effect on their lives. This suggests that there may be opportunities to harness gender identity to unite a diverse coalition of women and their allies. This may be particularly important in our current political environment where the nation faces a reversal of women's rights in light of the Supreme Court's lack of action on Texas's law violating *Roe v. Wade*, and as the pandemic has laid bare the disproportionate impact unpaid caregiving takes on women. By organizing as a coalition, women can yield greater political power in the pursuit of transformative social change.

## METHODOLOGY

From July 26 to August 10, 2021, Data for Progress conducted an online survey of 1,111 members from the Women's March. Members were contacted by email. The sample is unweighted.

From July 26 to August 10, 2021, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,534 women nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of women by age, education, and race. The voter segment variables are created using a combination of voterfile vote history data and self-reported responses on voting in the 2020, 2018, 2016, and 2012 elections. The "non-voters" category indicates no votes in any of the four elections, "sporadic voters" indicates votes in up to two elections, and "likely voters" indicates votes in all four elections. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points.

[Women's March Tabs](#)

[Women Nationally tabs](#)

COVER PHOTO  
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