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ABSTRACT

Intersectional activism is organizing that addresses more than one structure of oppression in the struggle for social justice. The rise of the Women's March as a massive effort to mobilize women primarily on the basis of gender coincided with calls for it to pay greater attention to intersectionality. This study considers the effectiveness of the Women's March at using intersectional activism as a collective action frame. Drawing on surveys conducted at Women's March events in five cities and four other Washington, DC activist events in 2018, this study examines the extent to which activists think that the movements should place a priority on intersectional activism. The results show that participants in Women's March events were more supportive of prioritizing intersectional activism than were activists at comparable protest events that were not mobilized using intersectional collective action frames. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that ideology may be a barrier to embracing intersectional activism, with more moderate and conservative activists placing a lower priority on intersectionality than did more liberal activists. Women's March activists were more likely to prioritize intersectional activism if they were trans- or LGBTQIA+-identified, or if they had a history of backing intersectionally marginalized causes, than if they did not.

The Women's March on Washington, first held on the day after the Inauguration of President Donald Trump, has become a significant force in American politics. In its first three years of existence (2017–2019), the March spurred millions of women (and men) to protest and inspired thousands to become involved in local and electoral politics (Fisher 2019). At the same time, the March was criticized for being insufficiently inclusive of marginalized groups of women. Many grassroots activists called on the March to embrace intersectionality by centering issues that matter to these groups (Quarshie 2018). They sought for the March to become a better reflection of *intersectional activism*, which Doetsch-Kidder (2012, 3) defined as "activism that addresses more than one structure of oppression or form of discrimination (racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, nationalism, etc.)."

The extent to which the Women's March exemplified intersectional activism has been a matter of debate among scholars and activists. Dana Fisher and her colleagues (Fisher,

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Dow, and Ray 2017; Fisher, Jasny, and Dow 2018) presented evidence that the March successfully assembled a coalition of organizations and activists with interests in a wide range of social issues, reflecting an intersectional approach to coalitions (Cole 2008). McKane and McCammon (2018) depicted the nature of the March (and its allied sister marches) more neutrally, describing it as having provided a venue for activists to gather, rather than as helping activists to define their grievances. However, Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood (2017) took a more critical view of the March, seeing it as defined by a "whiteness" that created barriers to solidarity building. Along the same lines, Brewer and Dundes (2018) emphasized the lack of inclusion felt by many African-American women who participated in the March. They saw the March as dominated by white women who were concerned with relatively trivial issues, such as whether they could show their nipples in public, rather than with issues of oppression, such as the shooting of unarmed black people. They were also suspicious of the loyalty of the white women present, suggesting that many of them had voted for Donald Trump, since he commanded the support of the majority of white women in the 2016 election. As Simien (2006, 24) documented, black women have historically raised similar objections when they were concerned that the women's movement "fail[ed] to address issues relevant to all women."

The goal of this article is to better understand the conflict between those who raised the Women's March as an exemplar of intersectional activism and those who depicted it as stoking divisions among women. It does so by examining the March's degree of success in using intersectionality as a *collective action frame* (Terriquez, Brenes, and Lopez 2018). David Snow and his colleagues (Snow, Vliegenthart, and Ketelaars 2019, 395) explained that collective action frames "are relatively coherent sets of action-oriented beliefs and meanings that legitimize and inspire social movement campaigns and activities." The Women's March's use of intersectional activism may have met this criterion because the March announced that it sought to be intersectional and called for women's mobilization on that basis, it presented an agenda that identified multiple forms of oppression, and it was co-chaired by women from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and occupational backgrounds. But did the March achieve *frame alignment* in its *micro-mobilization processes* (Snow et al. 1986; White 1999)? That is, were participants in the Women's March motivated to participate because of the use of intersectional activism as a collective action frame, or was that frame incidental to their participation? The more that the participants prioritized intersectional activism, the greater the frame alignment in the March's micromobilization; the more that participants were divided on intersectional activism, the less successful the March was in aligning frames.

This article examines the extent of frame alignment among participants in the Women's March using an original survey of participants in the 2018 Women's March on Washington and a sample of its sister marches. Another survey of participants in comparable grassroots marches held in Washington, DC in 2018 is considered in order to evaluate the extent to which the March's embrace of intersectionality can be attributed to the March's framing, or if grassroots participants independently brought these beliefs with them to their activism. Analysis of the survey data provides support both for the view that the Women's March successfully mobilized participants who embraced intersectional activism and for the view that the issue of intersectional activism was divisive within the March. Further, the results suggest that alignment with the intersectionality frame was

partly due to its deployment by the March as a collective action frame and partly due to grassroots participants bringing this frame with them to their activism. These findings illustrate how intersectionality had a complex role in helping to motivate and organize grassroots activism.

This article is organized into five parts. First, it discusses the concept of intersectionality and its extension to the related concept of intersectional activism. Second, it briefly reviews the history of the Women's March and the controversies associated with it. Third, it describes the survey, the data-collection process, and the questions addressed by the research. Fourth, it explains the data analysis. Fifth, it highlights the implications of this analysis for the Women's March and concludes by suggesting what these findings mean for future research on intersectional activism and social movements.

Intersectionality and intersectional activism

Intersectionality is an analytical tool for assessing the joint effects of power and complex social structures on people's lives (Weldon 2019). The core insight of this approach is that individuals who have multiple marginalized identities (e.g., they are both undocumented immigrants and queer) suffer from oppression from more than one direction, which creates a distinct experience of subjugation from what would be felt while having only one marginalized identity. Social critics have raised concerns along these lines for more than a century (Hancock 2016; May 2015; Tormos 2017). As May (2015) underscored, intersectionality not only involves *recognizing* these concerns, it further demands that its adherents *challenge* oppression through struggles for social justice.

The essential ideas of intersectionality theory came into sharper focus with the rise of the black-feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Combahee River Collective [1977] 1995; hooks 1984). In her foundational statement on the topic, bell hooks (1984) illuminated intersectionality using the example of feminism. She explained that feminism traditionally had been dominated by the viewpoints of white, middle-class women who wrote without appreciating the life experiences of women who had been oppressed by racism and classism. hooks (1984, 15) argued that the position of being simultaneously oppressed by racism, sexism, and classism enables black women to develop a critical consciousness that reveals the consequences of multiple, interacting social structures (see also Simien 2006; White 1999). In this vein, critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) coined the term "intersectionality" in her analysis of how black women suffered the consequences of racism and sexism in distinctive ways that were not recognized by existing discrimination law or programs to cope with sexual violence.

Since the 1990s, interest in intersectionality has exploded throughout legal studies, the social sciences, and society more broadly. Davis (2008) observed that this diffusion was enabled by the concept's ambiguity and incompleteness, along with the immediate recognition that it offers a compelling explanation of important social phenomena. These features give the concept a symbolic quality that enables it to be embraced by varied audiences for wide-ranging purposes. Dhamoon (2011) pointed out that this "mainstreaming" facilitated the use of intersectionality beyond sex, gender, race, and class to encompass dimensions such as territoriality, age, sexual orientation, ability, language, and culture. This type of analysis helped to develop intersectionality into a more general analytical tool for critical analysis (Collins and Bilge 2016, 4; Hancock 2007; McCall 2005).

While there is no dispute that intersectionality has been applied beyond the scope of how it was used by its progenitors, there is also no doubt that this extension has been controversial. Alexander-Floyd (2012) objected, for example, that stretching intersectionality beyond a black-feminist space serves to "disappear" the voices of women of color and, thus, re-subjugates their knowledge. According to Alexander-Floyd, this approach serves to flatten, de-historicize, de-contextualize, and tokenize intersectionality. Sumi Cho and her colleagues (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013) documented that this controversy was distributed across a variety of areas of intersectionality research.

In applying intersectionality to the context of social movements and activism, scholars have articulated a variety of similar but non-identical concepts such as "intersectional activism" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012), "movement intersectionality" (Roberts and Jesudason 2013), "intersectional mobilization" (Terriquez 2015), "affirmative advocacy" (Strolovitch 2007), and "intersectionally linked fates" (Strolovitch 2007, 186). These different terms do not necessarily correspond with variations in thinking on how intersectionality should be used in this arena. However, there were some notable differences in how scholars saw the relevance of intersectionality to social movements and activism.

Many scholars emphasized the ways that movements fail to be intersectional or the ways that intersectionality hindered the goals of social movements. Smooth and Tucker (1999) exposed how black women were relegated to behind-the-scenes roles in organizing the Million Man March in the Fall of 1995. In her analysis of the Pittston Coal strike, Beckwith (2014) reported that the intersection of class and gender served to marginalize the voices and roles of women who participated in and supported the strike. Wadsworth (2011) documented how conservative religious groups were able to use intersectionality as a way to draw the support of African Americans away from same-sex marriage rights in California. Strolovitch (2007) discovered that many advocacy organizations – even those ostensibly aimed at addressing inequalities of race, class, and gender – were often responsible for directing their efforts away from disadvantaged subgroups among their constituents.

Other scholars stressed that there are numerous ways that intersectionality can be used as a tool to improve social movements. Roberts and Jesudason (2013), Adam (2017), and Tungohan (2016) separately explained how recognizing intersectionality may aid coalition building. They each illustrated that coalitions of distinct marginalized groups may be unified around a collective identity of marginalization and experiences of oppression. They also pointed out how introducing an intersectional logic to a coalition potentially makes it harder for the coalition to put forward coherent positions and manage the balance of power among member organizations (see also Laperrière and Lépinard 2016). Laperrière and Lépinard (2016, 376) argued that intersectionality not only requires bringing together marginalized groups in coalitions, but also ensuring that "their specific needs are addressed in terms of service provision, and that they feel comfortable inside the organization." They explained that this strategy is a way to augment the power of marginalized groups within the movement. Similarly, Strolovitch (2007) advocated – consistent with the advocacy of the leaders of many social justice organizations – that addressing power asymmetries demands that social movements and other advocacy organizations affirmatively redistribute resources in the direction of disadvantaged subgroups within the movement/organization, which is what she means by "affirmative advocacy."

While many scholars emphasized the role of leaders in designing movements to address intersectionality, Terriquez (2015) also documented the importance of individual-level collective identity in addressing intersectionality. In her study of undocumented LGBTQ youth activists, she showed how individuals themselves brought consciousness of their multiple identities, as well as notions of intersectionality, with them to collective organizing. This individual-level activism thus pressured organizations to incorporate multiple identities, and their intersection, into organizational work. This study provided compelling evidence that intersectionality may flow from the bottom up, rather than only from the top down, in social movements and activism.

The Women's March and its controversies

Shortly after the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, a clamor began for a major protest by women in the nation's capital. This clamor was instigated by Trump's misogynistic behavior and statements during the 2016 presidential campaign, as well as disgust that he defeated a more qualified woman for the office despite abundant evidence of this behavior. Organizing began by activists using Facebook. On the night after the election, Teresa Shook (a retired attorney living in Hawaii) and Bob Bland (a fashion designer living in New York) separately made posts calling for a march on Washington, DC (Tolentino 2017). The two activists quickly combined their efforts. The resulting Women's March on Washington on January 21 2017 relied on intersectionality as a collective action frame. For example, Perez (2017, 4:15–4:31), a national co-chair of the March, told the crowd that "We will be brave, intentional, and unapologetic in addressing the intersections of our identities. And, collectively, we will stand up for the most marginalized among us, because they are us." On the same weekend, hundreds of sister marches took place around the world, together consisting of millions of people, making the 2017 Women's March one of the largest (if not *the* largest) protests in history (Chenoweth and Pressman 2018). Since January 2017, the Women's March held a Women's Convention in October 2017, coordinated anniversary marches in 2018 and 2019, contributed significantly to mobilizing voters in the 2018 congressional midterm elections, and assisted in staging other grassroots marches (Fisher 2019).

While the Women's March has quickly risen as a significant political force, it has also been deeply mired in political controversy since the outset of its organizing. The proposed march initially drew criticism because its primary organizers, Shook and Bland, were both white women. Calls for including more women of color in the organizing were met by adding three women of color – Linda Sarsour, Tamika Mallory, and Carmen Perez – to the organizing committee who, along with Bland, became the national co-chairs (Tolentino 2017). The proposed march was further critiqued because its initial name, the "Million Woman March," appropriated the name of an earlier march led by African-American women in Philadelphia in 1997 (Tolentino 2017). Hence, the name was changed to the "Women's March on Washington," which still made, for some, an uncomfortable connection with the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, an iconic part of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Pro-life organizations were excluded from coalescing with the March early in the organizing process in a nod to the pro-choice organizations that provided substantial funding for the March, as well as recognition by the organizers that pro-choice beliefs are central to their notion of what feminism is.

The March encountered a new round of controversy in late 2018 when leaders of the March were accused of anti-Semitism because of ties to Louis Farrakhan, the religious leader of the Nation of Islam (North 2018), who has made many negative statements about Jews. In part because of these controversies, and in part for logistical reasons, the Women's March has operated across many cities as a loose coalition – as a sisterhood – rather than as a single corporate entity.

Despite the specific incidents that have brought criticism to the Women's March and the clashing personalities of individual activists, it would be a mistake to give too much weight to these idiosyncrasies. The Women's March is the most substantial effort in several decades to organize women primarily on the basis of gender (Goss 2013). Such efforts typically prompt concerns about intersectionality, which is why women's organizations often turn to some form of hybrid organization to manage multiple-identity considerations (Goss and Heaney 2010). However, the Women's March was conceived and executed as a bold and ambitious endeavor that assembled myriad organizational and movement streams, such as supporters of Hillary Clinton's and Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns, pro-choice organizations, the progressive Left, the remnants of Occupy Wall Street, and legal and civic advocacy organizations (Berry and Chenoweth 2018). Given the breadth of this effort, the ultimate source of divisions was more the deeply ingrained differences in understanding about how women should organize together *as women*, if at all, than the actions of people who occupied particular organizational niches or the agendas of specific organizations.

Research design

This study involved surveys at events commemorating the first anniversary of the Women's March, which were held the weekend of January 20–21, 2018. The events were a series of rallies and marches held worldwide, which were planned by independent organizations acting in solidarity with one another. For example, the event in Las Vegas was planned by Women's March "Dot Com," while the event in New York was planned by the Women's March Alliance. Collective action frames used by the organizers included intersectionality, "Power to the Polls" (i.e., voting and/or running in the upcoming midterm elections), #MeToo (i.e., stop sexual assault and harassment), and impeach President Trump. These frames were used abundantly by organizers in media interviews and speeches, on social media, and in signage at events.

While much of the attention to the Women's March has focused on its protests in Washington, DC, its sister marches also constituted regionally significant political events in many places (Beyerlein et al. 2018). A photo of an activist promoting intersectional activism at the Women's March in Lansing, Michigan is contained in Figure 1. To capture the views held by participants at these events, surveys were conducted in five cities in the United States: New York, New York; Washington, DC; Lansing, Michigan; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Los Angeles, California. These cities were selected in an attempt to represent the United States geographically as well as possible (given limited resources) and because they were advertised with sufficient advance notice to plan a survey. These rallies were among the largest Women's March events held that weekend, with hundreds of thousands attending in New York and Los Angeles, and thousands attending in Washington, Las Vegas, and Lansing (Altavena 2018; Griffiths 2018; WUSA 2018; and surveyors' observations).

Figure 1. Intersectional activism at the Women's March in Lansing, Michigan, January 21, 2018.
Note: Photo by Michael T. Heaney.

In addition to surveying at Women's March events, surveys were conducted at four comparable rallies held on other issues in Washington, DC in early 2018. None of these rallies relied on intersectionality as a collective action frame. These rallies were the March for Life (anti-abortion, January 19), the People's March on Washington (pro-impeachment, January 27), the March for Trump (March 4), and the March for Our Lives (pro-gun control, March 24). The purpose of these surveys was to assess the level of support for intersectionality among the participants, despite this issue not being a part of the collective action frame for the marches. These rallies were advertised broadly on social media and held on a weekend day, downtown in the nation's capital, around the same time as the Women's March events. Coincidentally, they yielded a desirable comparison of two liberal rallies (People's March, March for Our Lives) and two conservative rallies (March for Life, March for Trump).

The anonymous, pen-and-paper survey contained six pages of questions about topics such as political attitudes, past electoral participation, past movement participation, social identity, and socio-economic status. To assess attitudes regarding intersectional activism, the survey asked participants at the event for their opinion on how important it is for the movement to address the concerns of marginalized groups. Specifically, the question was as follows:

How important is it that the women's movement center, represent, and empower the perspectives of subgroups of women, such as women of color, LGBTQIA+ women, and low-income women? Please circle one.
- Equal to the highest priority for the movement
- A high priority, but not the highest priority

- A moderate priority
- A low priority
- Not a priority
- Don't know / No opinion

This question deliberately did not use the phrase "intersectional activism." The concern was that asking explicitly about intersectionality would test the respondents' familiarity with the term, rather than their genuine support for the concept. Instead, the question asked how much the movement should prioritize "the perspectives of subgroups of women." By prioritizing the "perspectives" of these groups, the question signaled that the movement should attend to the varied issues that they find pressing. The term "subgroups" was drawn from Strolovitch (2007) and was intended to reflect the multiple identities stressed in intersectional scholarship. For example, "black women" would constitute a subgroup of women, using this language. The terminology "center, represent, and empower" was used to reflect the fact that action should be taken by the movement's leaders (i.e., centering), that subgroups should have a seat at the table (i.e., representing), and that grassroots activists should be able to act on their own, from the bottom up (i.e., empowering).

The question did not provide an exhaustive list of marginalized groups but used the phrase "such as" to give the respondent a sense of the intended scope. For example, "black women" were not mentioned specifically, but "women of color" were mentioned. The question was written with the expectation that the reader would infer that if subgroups "such as" women of color were included, then black women were also included implicitly. By prompting the reader with "LGBTQIA+ women" and "low-income women," the hope was that the respondent would also think of other marginalized subgroups, such as disabled women and immigrant women.

By signaling a high priority when answering this question, respondents indicated that they wanted the women's movement to prioritize the concerns of those that are intersectionally marginalized. In doing so, they gave an indication of endorsing the struggle for social transformation.

The intersectional activism question was modified for the non-Women's March events to allow for differences in the context. At the March for Life, it read "How important is it that the pro-life movement center, represent, and empower the perspectives of members of disadvantaged groups, such as African Americans, women of color, LGBTQIA+ persons, and low-income persons?" The other rallies used this wording but substituted the names of the pertinent movement (e.g., "impeachment movement" for "pro-life movement").

The intersectional activism question provides relevant insight into the degree to which respondents support intersectional activism. However, a skeptical reader might prefer questions about other aspects of intersectionality. For example, some readers might have preferred to see the question mention black women specifically, since the foundational analyses of intersectionality focused on black women. Or, some readers might have preferred for the question to include language about marginalization and oppression. Given these considerations, it is important to acknowledge that a limitation of the empirical analysis is that it is based only on one question to measure intersectional activism. Future studies in this domain might benefit from asking multiple, intersectionality-related questions and then combining them into an index (see Dawson 2001 and

Simien 2006 for examples of this approach). Thus, the current study provides leverage on understanding relevant aspects of intersectional activism, but does not cover all aspects of intersectional activism.

To conduct surveys at each event, a team of surveyors began by positioning itself around the perimeter of the rally. Each surveyor was instructed to look out into the crowd and select one person, called "the anchor." The anchor was not surveyed because of the assumption that this person was selected with bias by the surveyor. The surveyors were instructed to count five persons to the right of their anchor and invite that person to participate in the survey. Invitations were then issued to every fifth person until three surveys were accepted, after which a new anchor was selected by each surveyor, and the process was repeated until the end of the rally. Surveyors kept a record of nonresponses, making their best guesses of the race and gender of persons refusing. This study followed the protocol established by Heaney and Rojas (2014, 2015), though similar protocols have been employed by other studies, such as Fisher et al. (2005). Research shows that when protest surveys are conducted with careful attention to selection issues, as was the case in this study, they can provide a good representation of the protest population (Walgrave, Wouters, and Ketelaars 2016; Walgrave and Verhulst 2011).

Data were gathered with the objective of answering three questions. First, did the use of intersectionality as a collective action frame correspond with greater support for intersectional activism? Second, were there divisions among participants that explained variations in frame alignment on intersectional activism? If so, what factors corresponded with these cleavages? Third, was support for intersectional activism driven by collective action frames presented by movement leaders or by frames that participants brought with them?

Data analysis

Overall support for intersectional activism

Surveys at the five Women's March events yielded a total of 521 valid responses to the intersectional activism question. Surveys at the Women's March events had a 72% response rate, while the response rate was 61% at the March for Life, 86% at the People's March, 73% at the March for Trump, and 78% at the March for Our Lives. The survey results were weighted to account for nonresponse on the basis of estimated race and gender.

The results of the survey, presented in Figure 2, indicated strong support for intersectional activism across each of the Women's March events. The most common response to the survey question was that intersectional activism should be "equal to the highest priority for the movement." Support at this level ranged from 67% in Los Angeles to 80% in New York. The next highest level of support was given to the second strongest possible answer, "a high priority, but not the highest priority." Support at this level ranged from 13% in Las Vegas to 30% in Washington, DC. All other options received less than 8% support in every city. These differences are not statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(16)} = 25.477$, $p \approx .07$). Overall, the survey responses suggested that while prioritizing intersectional activism was not universally endorsed among Women's March participants, it was viewed as important by most participants.

Surveys at the four comparison events yielded a total of 422 valid responses to the intersectional activism question. The results of the survey, presented in Figure 3, revealed varied support for intersectional activism across each of the non-Women's March events. The minimum level of support for intersectional activism was registered at the March for Trump, at which 12% of respondents said this should be equal to the highest priority for the movement. At the high end, 59% of participants in the People's March said that intersectional activism should be prioritized equal to the movement's highest priority. This percentage is sizable, but still less than the minimum support observed at any Women's March event. While hardly any (less than 3%) of Women's March participants said that intersectional activism was "not a priority," 22% of participants at the March for Life gave this response. The differences among these events are statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(12)} = 83.793$, $p \leq .05$). The differences between the liberal events (People's March, March for Our Lives) and the conservative events (March for Life, March for Trump) especially underscore that the participants at ideologically distant events had very different ways of thinking about intersectionality, if they thought about the issue at all.

The difference between the support for intersectional activism at the Women's March events and the comparison events was statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(4)} = 59.801$, $p \leq .05$). This test provides evidence in favor of the view that the Women's March gathered crowds that were more supportive of prioritizing intersectional activism than were crowds at other comparable marches in Washington, DC. This result also held when the two conservative marches were excluded from the data ($\chi^2_{(4)} = 22.228$, $p \leq .05$).

It is important to note that some respondents may not have supported intersectional activism as strongly as they indicated in answering this question. For example, some respondents may have simply acquiesced to the survey question (Wright 1975). Or, respondents may have underreported their support even if they were more directly
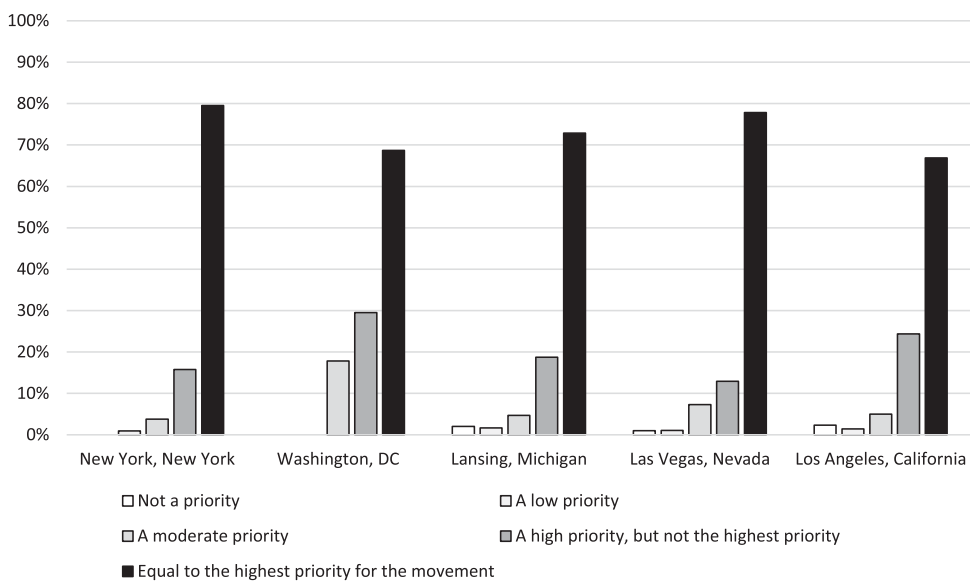

Figure 2. Support for intersectional activism at Women's March events, 2018.
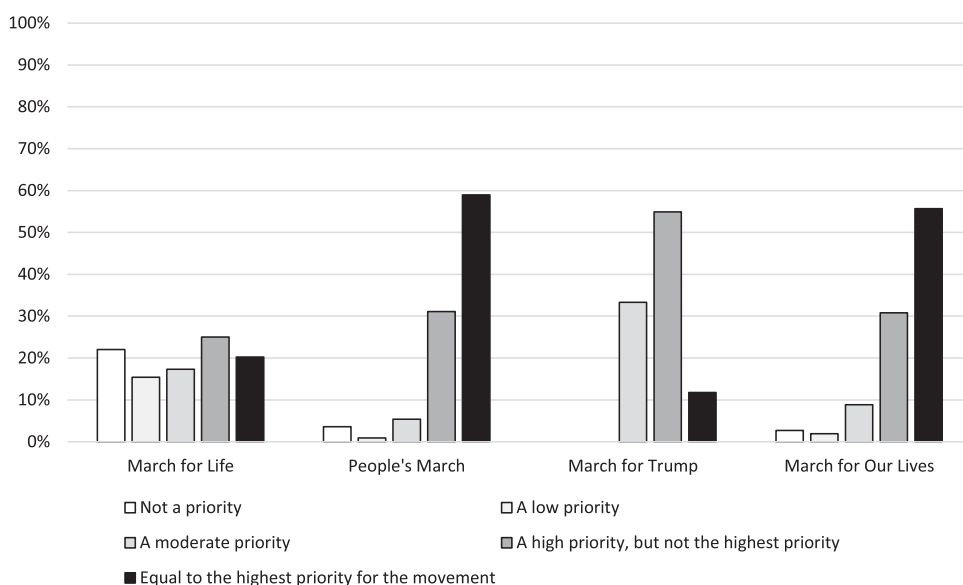Note: $N = 521$.

Figure 3. Support for intersectional activism at comparative events in Washington, DC, 2018.
Note: *N* = 422.

concerned with marginalization and oppression. Nonetheless, the results are consistent with the conclusion that participants in the Women's March considerably agreed with prioritizing intersectional activism, much more than was typically the case at other activist events.

Barriers to frame alignment

The previous section documents that not all participants in the Women's March, or in comparable marches in Washington, DC, participated for reasons that were aligned with the intersectional activism collective action frame. This section considers the structural and political factors that may have been barriers to that alignment, as well as how those barriers may or may not have differed between the Women's March and other grassroots protests. Four potential sources of division were social identity, political attitudes, political involvement, and participants' socio-economic status. The statistical analysis tests these factors for whether they help to explain alignment with the intersectional activism frame.

Social identity is the first and most obvious potential explanation for cleavages over intersectional activism. The pursuit of intersectional activism was potentially of deep personal importance to activists who embraced intersectionally marginalized identities (Tungohan 2016). White (1999, 77) explained that experiences of marginalization help to promote the success of frame alignment strategies linked to "racialized, gendered, and class-based micromobilization." McCormick and Franklin (2000) demonstrated that micromobilization may depend on participants' degree of racial consciousness (see also Dawson 1994). Swank and Fahs (2013) documented that these strategies were also relevant for sexual minorities. Of course, it is not necessarily the case that there are differences in support for intersectionality between members of marginalized and advantaged groups.

Instead, members of advantaged groups may choose to see themselves as allies to marginalized groups, and vice versa, thus potentially muting the effects of the difference (Droogendky et al. 2016).

Political attitudes are a second potential source of division regarding support for intersectional activism. Beliefs about activism are likely to be embedded within a broader package of ideas that individuals have been offered by political elites, which are generally presented as existing along the liberal-conservative continuum and/or through the platforms of political parties (Converse 1964; Noel 2013).

Political involvement is a third potential source of divisions. Activists' views may be developed through contact with activist and advocacy organizations (Munson 2008; Walker 1991, 129–130). As Heaney and Rojas (2015) argued, movement organizations may play a notable role in advising activists about how to think about contemporary political issues and partisan politics. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that activists who identify themselves with parties, ideologies, and/or activist organizations may align their views on intersectionality with these entities (Mason 2018). Individual activists may be inclined to take what they learn through one social movement and use it to shape their involvement in future movements (Meyer and Whittier 1994).

Fourth, socio-economic status may play a role in whether activists support intersectionality. Schlozman, Brady, and Verba (2018) document that persons with lower socio-economic status are less likely to be recruited by social movement organizations and less likely to volunteer on their own to participate in activism than are persons with higher socio-economic status (but see Schussman and Soule 2005 for contrary evidence). As a result, persons of lower socio-economic status may feel more isolated within social movements and, therefore, may be more sympathetic with appeals to intersectionality and inclusion.

The relevance of these four factors to frame alignment was examined using an Ordered Probit model of responses to the question on intersectional activism. Table 1 contained two models. Model 1 used data from the Women's March events and Model 2 used data from the four comparison events. Event dummy variables were included to account for average differences across events, with the Women's March in Washington, DC excluded as the base event in Model 1 and the March for Our Lives excluded as the base event in Model 2. The estimates were weighted to account for variations in survey nonresponse by gender and race and adjusted for stratification across events. Missing values were imputed using complete-case imputation, which is an appropriate method when there is a relatively low incidence of missing data, as was the case in this study (King et al. 2001; Little 1988; Wood et al. 2004). Descriptive statistics for these models are provided in Table 2, including survey-weighted means, standard deviations, and the percentage of observations imputed.

The results reported in Model 1 indicate the factors that were associated with support for intersectional activism in the Women's March. Trans- and LGBTQIA+-identified individuals were more likely than people with other social identities to support intersectional activism, suggesting that they may have seen a greater urgency for these issues than did cisgendered and straight individuals. However, there were no differences in support for intersectional activism between men and women, between nonwhites and whites, or on the basis of age, indicating that these groups had relatively close agreement on the prioritization of intersectional activism. Given the controversies surrounding the Women's March,

Table 1. Factors associated with support for intersectional activism.

Independent variable	Model 1 Women's March events	Model 2 Comparison events
Social identity		
Gender is female = 1	0.258	0.356*
	(0.144)	(0.131)
Gender is trans = 1	1.658*	1.002
	(0.723)	(0.554)
Race is nonwhite = 1	0.297	−0.008
	(0.158)	(0.191)
LGBTQIA+ = 1	0.563*	0.273
	(0.206)	(0.196)
Age in years	−0.008	−0.004
	(0.004)	(0.005)
Political attitudes		
Ideology (Conservative to Liberal 1–9)	0.232*	0.132*
	(0.053)	(0.049)
Party identification (Republican to Democrat 1–7)	0.492	−0.004
	(0.469)	(0.041)
Political involvement		
Member of political organization = 1	−0.186	0.070
	(0.136)	(0.138)
Past movement participation (Count of marginalized movements, 0–4)	0.182*	0.139
	(0.066)	(0.076)
Socio-economic status		
Income in thousands of dollars	0.000	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Level of education (Less than High School Grad. to Grad. Degree 1–6)	−0.046	0.043
	(0.051)	(0.051)
Event		
New York Women's March = 1	0.235	
	(0.174)	
Lansing, Michigan Women's March = 1	−0.030	
	(0.204)	
Las Vegas Women's March = 1	0.063	
	(0.188)	
Los Angeles Women's March = 1	−0.208	
	(0.180)	
March for Life = 1		−0.520
		(0.299)
People's March = 1		0.109
		(0.136)
March for Trump = 1		−0.100
		(0.339)
Cut points		
Cut Point 1	0.653	−0.923
	(1.379)	(0.453)
Cut Point 2	0.970	−0.617
	(1.142)	(0.462)
Cut Point 3	1.617	−0.067
	(1.398)	(0.464)
Cut Point 4	2.698	0.945
	(1.395)	(0.470)
Model statistics		
Sample size	521	422
F Statistic	4.04*	5.21*
F degrees of freedom	15, 502	14, 405

Notes: *$p \leq .05$. Models estimated using an Ordered Probit estimator. Standard errors in parentheses.

a significant difference between white and nonwhite respondents was expected. However, the results hint that the March may have been more unified on the basis of race at the grassroots level than among movement elites.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics – survey-weighed mean/(standard deviation)/[percent imputed].

Variable	Women's March events		Comparison events	
Dependent variable				
Support for addressing intersectionality (1–5)	4.648	N.A.	4.192	N.A.
	(0.671)			
Social identity				
Gender is female = 1	0.789	[13.13%]	0.625	[17.50%]
	(0.400)		(0.480)	
Gender is trans = 1	0.006	[13.13%]	0.016	[17.50%]
	(0.076)		(0.129)	
Race is nonwhite = 1	0.268	[12.46%]	0.193	[16.90%]
	(0.453)		(0.401)	
LGBTQIA+ =+1	0.212	[36.36%]	0.171	[38.77%]
	(0.411)		(0.386)	
Age in years	43.610	[14.48%]	41.942	[19.48%]
	(17.398)		(18.417)	
Political attitudes				
Ideology (Conservative to Liberal 1–9)	7.552	[15.15%]	6.702	[19.88%]
	(1.325)		(2.007)	
Party identification (Republican to Democrat 1–7)	6.226	[8.08%]	5.475	[10.74%]
	(1.156)		(1.749)	
Political involvement				
Member of political organization = 1	0.474	[10.94%]	0.334	[11.53%]
	(0.500)		(0.472)	
Past movement participation (Count of marginalized movements, 0–4)	1.561	[13.97%]	1.122	[16.90%]
	(1.277)		(1.213)	
Socio-economic status				
Income in thousands of dollars	99.257	[16.67%]	102.189	[22.27%]
	(104.233)		(100.640)	
Level of education (Less than High School Grad. to Grad. Degree 1–6)	4.506	[12.29%]	4.323	[16.90%]
	(1.439)		(1.660)	
Event				
New York Women's March = 1	0.213	[0.00%]		
	(0.410)			
Washington, DC Women's March = 1	0.300	[0.00%]		
	(0.458)			
Lansing, Michigan Women's March = 1	0.123	[0.00%]		
	(0.327)			
Las Vegas Women's March = 1	0.179	[0.00%]		
	(0.386)			
Los Angeles Women's March = 1	0.184	[0.00%]		
	(0.389)			
March for Life = 1			0.177	[0.00%]
			(0.366)	
People's March = 1			0.226	[0.00%]
			(0.424)	
March for Trump = 1			0.031	[0.00%]
			(0.176)	
March for Our Lives = 1			0.565	[0.00%]
			(0.494)	

In contrast to the Women's March, Model 2 indicates that gender was the only statistically significant social identity variable for the comparison events. Women attending the comparison events were more likely than men to say that they supported intersectional activism for the movements behind the comparison events that they attended, even though the organizers of those events did not stress intersectionality in their collective action frames. It appears that women were more inclined than men to bring intersectionality with them to their non-gender-focused activism.

The Women's March exhibited similarity with comparison events with respect to the relevance of political attitudes. In both models, the coefficient on ideology was positive and

statistically significant, though the coefficient on partisan identification was not statistically significant. These results demonstrated that ideology was a factor that tended to divide activists in their views on intersectional activism. More liberal ideological views were associated with a greater desire to prioritize intersectional activism. As a result, the Women's March – which was heavily dominated by activists on the left side of the political spectrum – may expect that less liberal or more moderate women may be more likely than activists on the far Left to resist initiatives that are motivated by intersectional considerations.

Past political involvement was associated with prioritizing intersectional activism among Women's March activists but not among those activists at the comparison marches. The results of Model 1 show that activists who had participated in a greater number of movements for marginalized constituencies (specifically, Black Lives Matter, civil rights, immigrant rights, and women's rights) tended to assign a higher priority to intersectional activism than did activists who participated in fewer of these movements. This finding also lends support to the view that activists brought their interest in intersectionality with them from past activism to the Women's March.

Neither socio-economic status nor event dummy variables were significantly associated with variations in prioritization for intersectional activism.

Were framing effects top-down or bottom-up?

A final question to address using the survey data is whether activists prioritized intersectional activism because movement leaders emphasized this concept in their collective action frames? Or, did activists bring this idea with them to the activist events that they choose to participate in? An Ordered Probit analysis on the combined Women's March and comparison events data indicated that Women's March participants were significantly more likely to be aligned with the intersectional activism frame, holding constant the independent variables included in the regression, than were participants in other marches ($t =$ 2.94, $p \leq .05$). Figure 4 reports the marginal effects in this equation of participation in the Women's March on the prioritization of intersectional activism. It illustrates that most of the marginal effects were on increasing the probability of observing "equal to the highest" and decreasing the probability of "high, but not highest," with other effects being relatively
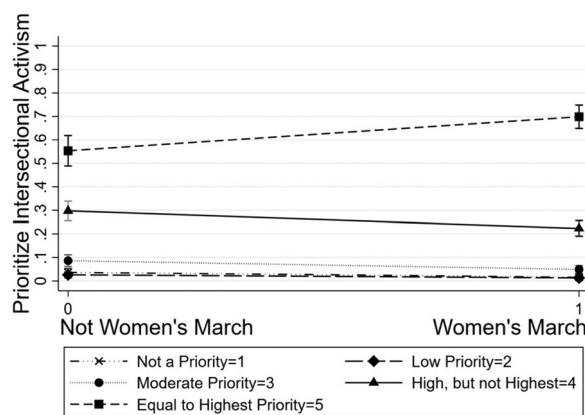

Figure 4. Marginal effects of women's March participation on prioritization of intersectional activism.

flat. A problem with this analysis, however, is that it did not account for the fact that activists participating in the Women's March may have been compositionally different from those participating in comparison events. That is, was the Women's March attended by people who prioritized intersectional activism, or did the March convince attendees to prioritize intersectional activism?

Propensity-score matching is a statistical technique that provides some leverage on the top-down, bottom-up question (Dehejia and Wahba 2002). This procedure weights the data so that Women's March participants were effectively compared with comparison-event participants as if they were statistically alike in all respects except having attended the Women's March. For example, a young, nonwhite woman who had participated in two prior movements for marginalized constituencies at the Women's March is compared with a weighted-equivalent person at a comparison event. When this method was applied, the average treatment effect indicated that a Women's March participant was likely to assign a higher priority to intersectional activism than was a weighted-equivalent participant at a comparison event ($t = 2.05$, $p \leq .05$). This result also held if the conservative events were excluded from the data ($t = 3.70$, $p \leq .05$). The implication of these findings is to support the view that attendance at the Women's March amplified the priority attached to intersectional activism. Thus, the evidence suggests that the collective action frame used by the Women's March leadership had at least some positive effect on encouraging participants to prioritize intersectional activism at the grassroots.

It would be incorrect to assume, however, that the effect of top-down framing rules out the possibility of bottom-up frame alignment. As is reported in the previous section, Women's March participants gave higher priority to intersectional activism the more that they had previously participated in movements for the interests of marginalized groups. These findings together indicate that processes of both bottom-up and top-down alignment were simultaneously at work.

Conclusion

Efforts at organizing women primarily on the basis of gender have historically prioritized the concerns of white, middle class, straight women. Thus, when the Women's March began a massive effort at organizing along these lines after the election of President Trump, activists concerned about intersectional marginalization raised red flags. They pressured the March to modify its organizing plans to accommodate the interests of marginalized constituencies. In response, the March adopted intersectionality as a collective action frame and took other concrete steps to align with an intersectional approach to activism. Subsequently, the March staged protests that – as demonstrated in this study – mobilized large groups of women (and others) that signaled their desire to see intersectionality as a high priority for the women's movement. This preference was greater at Women's March events than was the case of other comparable activist events held in Washington, DC. Thus, it is justified to conclude that the March achieved some reasonable degree of frame alignment with respect to intersectionality. While credit is owed to the March's leaders for projecting this frame, the evidence suggests that grassroots participants also learned about intersectionality from their prior activism.

It would be a misreading of this study, however, to claim that the Women's March transcended the problems of intersectional marginalization that tend to emerge when large groups of women organize together *as women*. As Blee (2012) and Lichterman (1995) emphasized in their research on grassroots organizational processes, collaborating on problems that differently affect vulnerable groups requires trust, which is often lacking between communities that do not frequently work together. Ideology was a factor that divided Women's March participants regarding intersectional activism, with more liberal activists placing a higher priority on this cause than did more moderate and conservative activists. Similarly, intersectional activism was not as important to cis-gendered and straight Marchers as it was to trans and queer Marchers. Activists with a history of involvement in movements for marginalized communities were more prone to endorse intersectional activism than were those without this background.

This research deepens what is known about the relationship between intersectionality and the politics of social movements. It highlights the importance of march organizers and grassroots participants in adopting collective action frames. It demonstrates how this process is both organizationally and ideologically driven. It raises the question of the relevance of participants' views about intersectionality, not only in movements that are focused on multiple axes of oppression, but also in movements that are not framed around these issues. With the mainstreaming of dialogues about intersectionality, this topic – along with imperatives to struggle against oppression and injustice – is likely to pervade social movement organizing at every level.

At the same time that it advances our understanding of intersectionality at the grassroots, this article leaves numerous questions unresolved for future research to address. For example, this study considered the support that respondents gave to intersectional activism but did not probe the diverse ways that activists may be oriented toward intersectionality or feminism (Greenwood 2008; Harnois 2005). How do participants understand the need to embrace the concerns of subgroups? How do participants understand the ways that issues are intersectionally constituted? These and other questions may be addressed not only by developing more complex batteries of survey questions about intersectionality but also by incorporating more qualitative analysis of movement activity into future studies.

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