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Media Models for Nonviolence: Instagram Representations of the #Womensmarch Mass Mobilization News and Audience Engagement

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This research explores representation of the massive but peaceful demonstrations for women's rights in 2017 on Instagram. Employing the framework provided by the protest paradigm in a content analysis of Instagram posts, results indicate coverage was most often framed with positive emotional behaviors and movement demands and agendas, by mainstream media producers, influencers, and other news curators on the site. Findings indicate media account type, rather than content features, may be the most influential engagement factor.

Keywords: protest, Instagram, social media, influencers, Women's March, news audiences, visual communication

In 2016, Teresa Shook issued a public call to march for women's rights after the inauguration of U.S. President Donald Trump. The call was the spark that ultimately ignited the first Women's March, held on January 21, 2017 (Kearney, 2016). While initially the event was presented as a single march taking place in the capital of the United States in Washington, DC, calls to action spread globally, and demonstrations were planned in more than 50 countries, indicating transnational solidarity and attention to a rejuvenated feminist movement. Media and marchers converged on the streets and in the channels of social media spaces. For both media institutions and citizens, social media networks serve as critical spaces for peer-to-peer interaction, broad networking, news seeking, and information distribution. These spaces have not revolutionized the societal power relationships that structure the world in which we live; however, they have diversified the media landscape, breaking some of the traditional gatekeeping barriers, and thus providing unique opportunities for researchers to explore the impact of digital communication.

The digital era has also revolutionized the ways in which activists, protesters, and advocates mobilize, recruit, signal their strength, and communicate with the press (e.g., Castells, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2012; Tufekci, 2017). Social media have served as spaces for community building (e.g., Jackson, Bailey, & Welles, 2017) and for challenging patterns established by the mainstream press (e.g., Harlow, Kilgo, Salaverría, & García-Perdomo, 2020). Alternatives to the mainstream press, such as ethnic and activist-oriented media organizations, are robust and hold credibility with audiences (Hermida & Hernández-Santaolalla, 2018). In the context of news produced by alternative media outlets—those that sponsor activist messages or use social-justice-oriented ethical models—scholars have found that protest coverage includes

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more coverage that is considered legitimizing for protest movements and activists (e.g., Harlow et al., 2020; Kilgo, Harlow, Salaverría, & García-Perdomo, 2018).

From online news organizations to alternative media news sites to individual media influencers, media creation and delivery are in the hands of an increasingly diverse group of producers that can inform publics in various ways. The present study explores the narrative variety produced in Instagram posts related to collective action participation and how it differs across influential entities that use social media to discuss one of the largest transnational protests of our time, the 2017 Women's March. Following the lead of scholarship on protest representation (e.g., Chan & Lee, 1984) and activism on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter (e.g., Tufekci, 2017), this study explores news coverage on the social media site Instagram, a photo- and video-sharing network founded in 2010 that has gained increased popularity in recent years. Content analysis approaches are used to examine the features that signal the collective identities needed to further repertoires of contention and legitimize protests (Benford & Snow, 2000), as well as the features that can push away potential activists or marginalize the movement. This research also seeks to advance our understanding of social media engagement by identifying which content features are correlated with increased or decreased interactions in terms of social media engagement.

Building on existing theoretical foundations about collective action representation and modern activism, this research probes questions related to media production behaviors around a newsworthy transnational collective action event. Ultimately, this work indicates that new paradigms of representation must be constructed to understand media representation of social movements in an era marked by increased political and protest activity (Global Database of Events, Language and Tone [GDELT], 2016).

21st Century Protests and the Women's March

Protests and collective action efforts are often movements' attempts to gain the attention of elites and to become more visible and credible among the public. New media technologies have revolutionized activism, affecting aspects such as internal communication, connection with the press, mobilization abilities, representation, and security (e.g., Bennet & Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2012; Tufekci, 2017). Social media's personalized components and organizational features such as hashtags have been central organizing mechanisms that help connect ideas, communities, and conversations across networks and infrastructures (e.g., Jackson et al., 2017; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011).

The Arab Spring was among the first concrete evidence that revolution could be mobilized and televised through nontraditional channels (Tufekci, 2017). Social media communication volume multiplied during the Arab Spring (Howard et al., 2011). This created new avenues for the diffusion of messages (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013) and built new arenas for activist organization (Tufekci, 2017). Since the Arab Spring, several other internationally recognized movements have developed, including the Occupy Wall Street Movement, Black Lives Matter, and the focus of this study, the Women's March on Washington.

The Women's March was first held in 2017. The movement self-describes as a "woman-led movement . . . committed to dismantling systems of oppression through nonviolent resistance and building inclusive structures guided by self-determination, dignity, and respect" (Women's March, n.d., para. 1). It

originated as a response to violence against women and was specifically stimulated by a sound bite of Trump expressing derogatory comments and dehumanizing rhetoric, excused by some as "locker room talk." Because the initial march was held the day after Trump's inauguration, many people considered the movement an anti-Trump movement. Notably, however, organizers of the Women's March worked to formalize and centralize the movement before the scheduled collective action event, and the goals of the bureaucratized agenda explicitly centered women's rights and refuted anti-Trump sentiment (Jamieson, 2016).

As one of the largest transnational movements of its time, the 2017 Women's March was both extensively discussed on social media and covered by news organizations. Around the world, patriarchal societies are the norm and gender inequalities persist; this case, then, serves as a unique point of entry into the study of a robustly transnational protest. It also offers the opportunity to explore protest representation patterns in the hybrid media environments hosted by social media platforms.

Social Movements and Media Coverage

For social movements, media coverage has long been considered a crucial component to acquiring desired visibility (Ryan, 1991). However, decades of research show that, overall, traditional media frameworks have ineffectively covered the grievances and goals of protest movements (e.g., Gitlin, 1980; McLeod, 2007). Press patterns are analyzed through a framework that suggests media contribute to the stabilization of the status quo by minimizing and delegitimizing protesters. This is often referred to as the protest paradigm. These patterns help bolster Amenta and colleagues' (2019) claims that protest is a "flawed tool" because when protesters receive the needed attention from the media, the coverage is not constructive. Press coverage of feminist movements also has a history of instability. First ignored and then treated with contempt (Robinson, 1978), the feminist movements of today are marginalized, though the press extends them more legitimizing treatment than it does other protests (Kilgo & Harlow, 2019).

With the protest paradigm well established in traditional media production, it is useful to expand our knowledge of protest coverage patterns to the content that news organizations produce on social media networks. Digital interventions upended the tight grip that traditional journalists once had on representation patterns. Online networks and digital connectivity have broadened the array of media makers who can contribute to the representations of protests in various ways. Access to mobile and social technologies has provided opportunities to "give voice to the marginalized and silenced" (Chen, Pain, & Barner, 2018, p. 198). Recent movements have used online technology to cultivate and maintain collective identities and signal their power to others, including the media and government (Tufekci, 2017). Their realized and mediated power has the potential to shift public discourse, political reaction, and media representation. Digital media have also opened opportunities for dialogues that include more personalized, strategic, and persuasive narratives that signal solidarity and empowerment to others (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Social media host a diversified landscape for media production. Typically, media are divided into genres that differentiate news from other content creators. However, in what Chadwick (2013) describes as a hybrid media environment, the boundaries of what news is can be hard to define in scholarship, among producers, and for audiences. For example, Gil de Zúñiga and Hinsley (2013) note that audiences tend to

think news should be produced by trained journalists and artifacts should be reliable, fair, and trustworthy. However, reliable, fair, and trustworthy become subjective in today's hyperpartisan political climate. Social media have contributed to changes in journalistic practice among the classically trained organizations, producers of online-native and alternative media, and other news producers such as citizen journalists (e.g., Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012; Tandoc & Vos, 2016).

In addition, the celebrity-like emphasis of individual influencers on social media is important to consider. Influencers, also described as microcelebrities, have distinct followings, brands, and identities (e.g., Marwick, 2013). In their analysis of influencers, Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) noted that "one need not own a printing press or a broadcasting station to reach large audiences anymore," and influencers take part in informing audiences and distributing information (p. 818). In social media sites, influencers play prominent roles in directing discourse, often taking on functions as pivotal opinion leaders, but we have a limited understanding of how they produce coverage about and during protests. The present research accounts for the hybrid media environment by considering the content that individual influencers produce as essential to assessing the discourse about news events on social media.

Traditional news media, alternative and online-native news, and influencers do not exist in a vacuum on social media, yet social media offer these entities incredible power to discuss issues and create patterns of representation. By using the well-established protest paradigm framework used to analyze traditional press coverage, this work seeks to advance our understanding of the representation of protest in social media.

Features of Protest Representation

Protest paradigm scholars have used various typologies to analyze news coverage (e.g., Chan & Lee, 1984; Dardis, 2006; Nicolini & Hansen, 2018). These typologies are driven by framing theory, which anticipates that media are prone to emphasize one aspect of a narrative over another, thereby pushing for one kind of evaluation or interpretation of the reality over another (Entman, 2007). For protests, frames are typically sorted into delegitimizing and legitimizing narratives (e.g., Harlow & Johnson, 2011). The present work uses Dardis' (2006) multipoint framework for identifying the features of news coverage in the Women's March. This framework includes key delegitimizing features such as mentions of violence, destruction, threat, illegality, disruption, and inconvenience. Sensational features (referred to as the spectacle of protest) are also accounted for. These narratives emphasize trivial features of protests, emotionality, and odd or unusual behavior. Positive or legitimizing features comprise the inclusion of the demands, grievances, and agendas of protesters (McLeod & Hertog, 1999).

Instagram and Audiences

The various cultures and affordances of any particular social media platform are important when assessing public interest and popularity, and Instagram, the centralized platform in the present study, boasts a unique and evolving group of users and a platform culture that is underexplored in media scholarship. Established in 2010 as a photo-sharing platform, Instagram offers users the ability to document a photo and video gallery of their lives while following anyone from friends and family to celebrities and

influencers. The site is popular among younger generations and has traditionally had more female users than male users (Fuscaldo, 2019). Retallack and colleagues (2016) note that Instagram can serve as a space for the exploration and navigation of fourth-wave feminism. In their study exploring feminist activities among young girls, the researchers found that Instagram helped facilitate spaces and counterpublics for expression and the opposition of patriarchal structures related to beauty and perfectionism standards and aid in offline mobilization for offline activity. The contemporary feminist era, or fourth-wave feminism, is notably characterized by feminist activism through technology. Considering the possibility that Instagram is unique in its ability to offer a productive space for effective movement building and activism, the present study uses the site to explore the representation of one of the largest offline transnational feminist-oriented collective action in history.

Information, media, and news producers have frequently considered social media audiences to be active and essential parts of the media landscape (Rosen, 2006). Their interactions have in many ways become forms of currency. This has caused a shift in the way media organizations assess quality and success and has contributed to the drastic changes in online media presentation evidenced in recent years. Measures of impact and success of a story have increasingly relied on the metrics of social media interactions. Increased interactions can signal public interest in or support for a particular message, and interactions can serve as an indicator for popularity (Fox & Moreland, 2015).

Algorithmic measures dictate the visibility of posts on the site and play a considerable role in information dissemination. Before 2016, Instagram feeds were sorted by the most recent posts. The introduction of a new algorithm created news feeds that incorporated timeliness, user frequency, and predictive content preferences into a more complex formula that ultimately dictated what audiences would and would not see (Costine, 2017). During the Women's March of 2017, these algorithmic preferences likely meant that those using Instagram to post about the march were more likely to see posts about the march in their feeds. However, because algorithms are specific to a series of individual features, generalized conclusions about post exposure and order in news feeds cannot be extracted from public interfaces. Instead, researchers have routinely relied on visible metrics, such as the numbers of shares, reactions, and comments to assess social media engagement. Instagram's digital architecture lends two types of visible metrics: the like and comment buttons. Instagram does not have a native sharing feature; instead, users must rely on third-party apps to share other people's pictures to their profiles.

Scholarship on the mediated representation of collective action and social media content have typically assessed these interactions as ways of understanding distribution. Visible interactions are symbolic of users' interests, behaviors, and emotions. Liking is often considered an interaction that is less involved than commenting. Commenting is reflective and more highly involved, indicative of a deeper commitment to the content's message (Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf, & Donthu, 2017). Research shows extreme inconsistency in sharing and engagement patterns (e.g., Bright, 2016; Kilgo et al., 2018; Valenzuela, Piña, & Ramírez, 2017).

In accordance with prior research findings indicating that (a) mainstream media organizations marginalize protest efforts and (b) new media efforts have challenged existing paradigms, this research seeks to describe and compare collective action representation and audience engagement on social media.

In the context of the 2017 Women's March, this research explores the following research questions and hypothesis:

RQ1: How were collective action efforts related to the 2017 Women's March represented in social media posts?

H1: Of the sources contributing posts to the social media landscape, mainstream media outlets will use delegitimizing features more often than legitimizing features when covering the Women's March.

RQ2: What patterns of protest coverage emerge in nonmainstream media coverage of the Women's March?

RQ3: In what ways do post narrative features influence audience interaction on social media?

Method

A content analysis of Instagram posts and the extra-message linkage of audience interaction data were used to answer the research questions and hypothesis of this study. While much social movement research has focused on community building and mobilization through Twitter and Facebook, Instagram's network offers different technological features and a different site culture. Instagram's inherently visual space makes the platform vital for research inquiry on visual communication and activism.

Publicly available data were collected from more than 300,000 accounts on Instagram by using NewsWhip (www.newswhip.com), a third-party archive of the application program interface (API) of the publicly available content. NewsWhip archives public posts from specific accounts, prioritizing major news organizations, frequently visited websites, and influencer accounts. The numerous accounts tracked predominantly consisted of individual influencers (celebrities, politicians, Internet socialites, verified accounts, and social media influencers) as well as media producers and media creators (mainstream, alternative, online, and niche). Though this selection of accounts is not without limitation, it allows for an in-depth look at the representation of the Women's March on Washington from accounts that have various levels of online and offline public influence. Social media influencers "represent a new type of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media" (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011, p. 90); thus, their mediated representations are key components of the media landscape that should be better understood.

From the archive, a total of 1,982 posts that included the terms "Women's March" or "#womensmarch" were collected from January 14 through January 28, 2017. A sample of the 900 posts with the most social media interactions was analyzed, allowing for a 95% confidence level with a 2.5% margin of error (Neuendorf, 2017). Coders coded from the direct URLs of each post; deleted posts were removed from the sample without replacement, as were posts that were not principally related to the march. The final content analysis includes 692 posts.

Pilot Study

An extensive pilot study was performed before the final analysis of this work to develop a codebook that comprehensively revises the devices and frames outlined in previous research on protest coverage in traditional media (Dardis, 2006; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). This pilot study confirmed the critical need for an adaptive operationalization of prominent contextual narratives of protest in the context of social media event coverage that is more inclusive of the visual communication artifacts and narratives produced on social media. This included considerations for information written on signs (derogatory language, violent rhetoric, or imagery), and the degree of formality of the demands and agenda items with the bureaucratized Women's March effort (www.womensmarch.com). The final codebook and measures were informed by this pilot study.

Coding Protocol and Variables

The codebook contained inclusive measures related to prominent protest frames, designated as theoretically legitimizing and delegitimizing, and media account type. Two researchers established acceptable intercoder reliability scores ranging from .77 to 1.0 using Cohen's Kappa calculations before coding the final sample.

The legitimizing features explored in this study include the key components of the debate frame as operationalized by protest paradigm scholars (e.g., Dardis, 2006; McLeod & Hertog, 1999), and the efficacy-eliciting frame as operationalized by visual communication scholars (e.g., Kharroub & Bas, 2016). Coders identified if there was a demand or grievance listed in the caption and photos. In photos, this included images that featured signs with written demands or objectives; in captions, specific references to demands were coded. Formal and informal demands, agendas, and grievances were considered in this study. Features were not mutually exclusive.

- Formalized Advocacy Grievances and Demands. Formal advocacy demands include mentions of the March's explicit agenda item listed on its website (www.womensmarch.com). This included human rights (e.g., "Women's rights are human rights"), unraveling gender norms (e.g., "Women work too"), LGBTQ/nonbinary rights, police brutality, economic inequality, and disability rights, racial and ethnic injustice, immigration and the border wall, and abortion and women's health.

- Other Grievances and Demands. Though the 2017 Women's March did not formally affiliate with petitions of Trump, both the inspiration for and timing of the protest helped affiliate Trump with the movement's grievances. Therefore, calls for Trump's impeachment or anti-Trump agendas were identified. Coders were instructed to look primarily for negative mentions of Trump in the pictures, captions, or hashtag language. These included phrases, symbols, or images in captions or photos that negatively described or mocked Trump or his positions (e.g., "Tuck Frump," "Build a wall around Trump"), negative caricatures, hashtags such as #dumptrump, and distorted pictures that cast Trump in a negative light. Captions that simply mentioned Trump with no negative valence were not included in this category, most commonly appearing in hashtags (e.g., #trump, #trumpinauguration). Responding to critiques of the Women's March and the feminist movement

more broadly, captions and photos were also coded for mentions of negative messages about men that mirror negative Trump commentary or resemble misandry.

- Motivational Agendas. Adapting the motivational agendas identified by Fisher and colleagues' (2017) survey of Women's March protesters, coders identified the presence of two motivational themes that gave more personalized agenda approaches to the debate frame: empowerment (e.g., "Have your voice heard" and "You have a right to protest") and solidarity (e.g., mentions of solidarity, unity, or togetherness) either vaguely or among specific groups.

Coders identified if posts included various components of delegitimizing frames, which included confrontation, riot, and spectacle frames of protest (McLeod & Hertog, 1999) in conjunction with observations from the pilot study. The spectacle frame had four coded features: mobilization size, distinguished protester, odd/unusual communication or behavior, and emotional displays.

- Riot. The riot frame is most prominently operationalized through the lens of physical violence and property destruction. However, the concept also extends to threats and implied violence. To explore the riot frame through the lens of threat, coders identified if (1) the post included mentions of the action of physical violence or property destruction, or (2) communication rhetoric or messages insinuated violence or destruction (expressed intentions to harm someone). This includes phrases that indicate someone would engage in physically aggressive behavior (e.g., "This pussy bites back").

- Police Confrontation. Though several media accounts celebrated the absence of protester arrests directly related to the march, the presence of law enforcement and confrontation is still possible and relevant. Coders identified if arrests, confrontation, or otherwise contentious interactions with police appeared in the visual or the caption.

- Mobilization size. Coders identified if the image included depictions of large crowds in pictures or if the caption described large crowd sizes, the massiveness of the mobilization, or the general geographic scope of the protest size (e.g., "marchers in countries across the world").

- Distinguished protester. When images include pictures of protesters, coders were asked to identify the presence or absence in the image or caption of the following identity descriptors associated with the spectacle frame: politicians, celebrities, and children (those who appeared to be obviously younger than 18).

- Oddity. Oddity included two dimensions: rhetorical devices and emotional behavior. For rhetorical devices, coders were asked to identify the presence or absence of visual or textual mentions of (1) vulgar, obscene, or slang language, and (2) anatomical language referencing the body or sexual organs (e.g., vagina). For emotional behavior, coders looked for words that were affiliated with positive and negative emotions or actions (e.g., love, hate). In images, emotional displays included depictions of individuals in obvious expressive emotional states.

Media Account and Social Media Data

User accounts were identified as one of the following three account types: mainstream news media account (*n* = 175, 25.3%), individual influencer account (*n* = 257, 29.7%), and open-coded other account. The open-coded accounts were categorized by the researchers after coding was complete and included the following categories: alternative/ethnic/activist media (*n* = 200, 28.9%), online media organizations or news organizations that first appeared online (*n* = 69, 10%), health/lifestyle publications (*n* = 132, 19.1%), and a category that consisted of all accounts that didn't fit into prior categorizations, primarily corporate commercial media accounts (*n* = 57, 8.2%).

Social media reaction data were collected by using NewsWhip analytics data archives to assess commenting and liking totals directly from the post.

Data Analysis

To answer RQ1, RQ2, and H1 descriptive statistics, crosstabulations and Bonferroni-corrected comparisons were used. For RQ3, social media sharing data were transformed using logarithmic transformation to allow for parametric analysis. After normalization, box plots still indicated outliers, and these were thematically analyzed to enhance the overall discussion of RQ3.

Results

RQ1 explored the overall representation of the march (Table 1). Results showed spectacle was central to coverage, with positive emotional cues and mobilization size appearing most often.

Table 1. Crosstabulation and Chi-Square Analysis of Content Producers and Instagram Post Narratives.

	Influencer	Main-stream	Alt. Media	Health/ Life	Online Media	Other	Total	χ^2
Legitimizing	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Formal Demands	24.5[a]	38.9[b]	32.2[ab]	28[a]	43.5[b]	36.8[ab]	32.4	14.6^{***}
Anti-Trump	23[a]	29.1[a]	27.1[a]	22.7[a]	53.6[b]	26.3[a]	28.2	26.9^{***}
Anti-Men	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–
Solidarity	35[a]	16[b]	2.2[ab]	29.5[a]	21.7[a]	28.1[ab]	27	19.5^{**}
Empower	11[a]	2.3[a]	6.8[ab]	6.8[ab]	11.6[a]	10.5[ab]	7	12.7^{*}
Delegitimizing								
Size	26[a]	61.7[b]	44.1[abc]	25.8[a]	47.8[bc]	28.1[ac]	38.9	36.9^{***}
Children	10	16	6.8	10.6	11.6	5.3	11.1	7.6
Celebrities	8.5[a]	6.3[a]	6.8[a]	35.6[b]	5.8[a]	8.8[a]	12.7	77.7^{***}
Vulgar	15.5[ab]	6.9[b]	11.9[ab]	14.4[ab]	26.1[a]	8.8[a]	13.3	18.2^{**}
Anatomy	1[a]	2.3[a]	5.1[a]	1.5[a]	2.9[a]	1.8[a]	2.0	–
Pos. Emotion	58[a]	38.3[b]	49.2[ab]	55.3[a]	44.9[ab]	47.4[ab]	49.6	17.0^{***}
Neg. Emotion	22.5[a]	14.3[a]	16.9[a]	13.6[a]	14.5[a]	17.5[a]	17.1	6.6
Police Confront.	0	0	5.1	0.8	1.4	0	.7	–
Physical Violence	.5	0	3.4	0	0	0	0.4	–
Violent Language	2.5	2.9	5.1	6.1	8.7	1.8	4.0	8.0

Note. [abc] Superscripts represent column proportions where no significant differences were found. – indicates missing values where expected cell counts were too low for reliable chi-square analysis. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$.

Formal demands appeared in about one-third of coverage, just more often than those that were anti-Trump. No posts included grievances directed at men. Mentions of general solidarity were also prevalent. In general, features affiliated with more negative or criminal behavior or actions (police confrontation and violence framing features) appeared infrequently.

H1 predicted that posts from mainstream media outlets would include features of the delegitimizing riot, police confrontation, and spectacle more often than legitimizing features. As shown in Table 1, the most prominent features of mainstream coverage were related to the spectacle and debate frame, while riot and police confrontation features appeared less often. H1 was only partially supported. Of the spectacle frame features, mobilization size was the most prominent, appearing in 61.7% of all coverage (n = 108). Positive emotional displays, another component of the spectacle frame, were prevalent in 38.3% of coverage (n = 67). However, an emphasis on demands was present in more than half of coverage (n = 90, 51.4%), and those demands were aligned with the formalized Women's March agenda (n = 68, 39.0%) more often than

with anti-Trump agendas (*n* = 51, 29.1%). Explicit mentions of police confrontation and riot framing features were not found in mainstream media coverage, and violent language appeared in only five posts.

The hybrid media system offered dynamic representation patterns (RQ2). Online, alternative, and the other category of Instagram accounts generally represented marcher demands more than health/lifestyle, mainstream, and influencer accounts [χ^2 (5) = 25.9, $p < .001$]. Differences were also found in the proportion of formal demands [χ^2 (5) = 14.6, $p < .001$], with individual influencers less likely to represent the formal demands than mainstream and online news publications ($p < .05$). Additionally, differences were found in the representation of the anti-Trump agenda [χ^2 (2) = 25.9, $p < .001$]. Online publications' posts included significantly more anti-Trump coverage than all other Instagram account categories ($p < .05$). Mainstream media were less likely to include posts about empowerment through protest than most other account holders ($p < .05$).

When it comes to features of the spectacle frame, representations of mobilization size were significantly different [χ^2 (5) = 36.9, $p < .001$]. As reported earlier, mainstream media posts emphasized mobilization and crowd size the most, though results showed alternative and online publications had significantly similar proportions. Individual influencers included significantly fewer posts that emphasized crowd size. Lifestyle media accounts were significantly more likely to include celebrities than all other media accounts.

Significant differences were found in proportional inclusion of posts with obscene or vulgar features [χ^2 (5) = 17.0, $p < .001$]: Online publications included significantly more of these features than mainstream media. Mentions of human anatomy using nonvulgar language appeared infrequently though were notably found most often in mainstream media coverage. Influencer and health/lifestyle media accounts were significantly more likely to include positive emotional displays than mainstream organizations ($p < .05$), though no differences were found in the presence of negative emotional displays [χ^2 (5) = 6.6, $p = .26$]. Police confrontation and riot narratives appeared too infrequently for statistical comparisons, and none were from mainstream media or accounts in the other category. Finally, no differences were found in the inclusion of violent language across organization types [χ^2 (5) = 8.0, $p =.155$].

Finally, RQ3 explores audience interaction with posts. The regression analyses controlled for media outlet designation in Block 1 and included features in Block 2. For likes [$f(670) = 1.185$, $p = .257$] and comments [$f(691) = .839$, $p = .671$], results showed that the full models were not significant.

Normalization box plots indicated that there were outliers. Of these outlier posts, entertainment celebrity Ariana Grande had three posts that were outliers in terms of likes and comments, indicating that her celebrity status extended to social networks and her popularity there was pronounced. One National Geographic post featuring the massive crowd in front of the White House was also an outlier for both outcomes.

For likes, five additional outliers were from online-native news organizations including Refinery 29 and Carbonated TV. These posts emphasized crowds and protesters. In addition to the Grande and National Geographic posts mentioned earlier, a post from Madonna was an outlier in this data set; this post depicted her participation in the march. The Shade Room, an alternative media celebrity gossip site most prominently

catering to the Black diaspora, had three outlier posts: one that included a video of a Black celebrity at the march and two others that criticized President Trump.

Discussion

The groundbreaking mobilization of the 2017 Women's March provided an exceptional opportunity to analyze and critique the mediated representation of collective action, feminist protest, and transnational movements on social media in a singular event. In addition, this study explores the representation of content produced by a diverse set of media content creators, including journalists from mainstream, alternative, and ethnic media, advocates, celebrities, and corporate businesses. This study considers how social media and images of protests can be quantified, adding to efforts to build more comprehensive typologies inclusive of visual communication.

Findings indicate that there are similarities in the depictions of protests on social media, irrespective of the radicalness or valence of tactics. Echoing Kharroub and Bas' (2016) assessment of visual content posted during peak moments of the Arab Spring, results showed that coverage of this peaceful protest emphasized efficacy-eliciting posts that included images of crowds and the use of signs during marches. Findings indicate that the formal advocacy goals and grievances were regular features of Instagram content, appearing in about half of all posts. The consistent reliance on this frame is unlike the original patterned predictions of the protest paradigm theory (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Still, it is in line with more recent work that outlines the contingencies of the patterns of the paradigm (e.g., Shahin, Zheng, Sturm, & Fadnis, 2016). Additionally, the results of this study give more empirical evidence of the impact of the designation of Instagram as a space for fourth-wave feminist conversations and societal critique (Retallack et al., 2016), and results ultimately show that Instagram served as a venue expanding the landscape of legitimizing representations. However, the analysis in the present study also illustrates limitations to the depth of legitimization. In essence, the march's formal goals related to women's rights, as stated on the official Women's March website agenda, were matched by an almost equal volume of anti-Trump messages, a polarizing narrative from which the bureaucratized movement had initially distanced itself (Jamieson, 2016). As in social movement development, the incongruence of different factions of movement goals might contribute to variations in public attitudes about the protest and those protesting. Additionally, just as violent language was considered a component of the riot frame in this study, the emphasis on anti-Trump agendas might be considered a form of rhetorical confrontation with the assumed opposition. Though this study did not code for confrontation from this perspective, future research should further consider how rhetoric is used and reproduced by media organizations, content producers, protesters, and spectators to evoke frames in the absence of sensational and radical behaviors and tactics.

Results show online organizations as progressive news providers. Consistent with prior empirical research that has examined variations in protest coverage production, these news organizations included the most demands in posts (Kilgo et al., 2018). Meanwhile, influencers included demands the least, but emphasized solidarity and empowerment more often than most other content producers. The abundance of efficacy-eliciting narratives may position Instagram influencers as leaders of a movement (rather than participants). On the other hand, the lack of emphasis on the substance of the movement and protests might bring in a sense of superficiality that can complicate movement relations with its formal organizers.

Though not all influencers can be considered advocates, this finding does beg for further exploration of media production practices of participants, activists, and online influencers, and the congruency of their media messages and affiliations with broader movement ideas, goals, and agendas.

Findings provide support for a larger critique of the immense privilege the mainstream press affords the Women's March collective action efforts (Brewer & Dundes, 2018) that framed the Women's March as a model for nonviolence (Sellers & Wax-Thibodeaux, 2019) and celebrated its "peace and positivity," zero arrests, and nonviolent tactics (McCausland, 2017). Though low in numbers, riot- and confrontation-related features explicitly appeared in the sample, with about 4% of posts including violent or aggressive language. Unlike other human rights protests that have been covered in the mainstream press, these activities were not exaggerated or overemphasized in Instagram media posts. Additionally, the relatively low numbers of emphasis riot framing features indicate that the Women's March was not subject to the anticipation or expectations for violence despite its multisite location and often-massive protest sizes—a delegitimizing feature more prevalent in coverage of human rights protests like the peaceful protest efforts that have followed unjust killings of Black men, women, and children (Kilgo, Mourão, & Sylvie, 2019).

Ultimately, the access to digital and social technologies has disrupted the paradigmatic patterns theorized during a time when information was distributed through a less diverse set of gatekeepers. However, factors beyond the scope of this study may be in play. For example, Ashley and Olson (1998) have indicated that feminist movements have been routinely marginalized by the press through narratives that emphasized appearance. In visual networks like Instagram—where visual communication is required in each post—the emphasis on protester appearance may indicate that the platform inherently exploits or personalizes (through individual affiliation) the movement's appearance. The complexities of this possibility, from selfie to ambitious crowd size, should be tested within the framework of the protest paradigm and beyond. Future work might also further develop ways nuance in the paradigm's critique of appearance emphasis as delegitimizing, especially considering the increasing reliance on visuals through social networks and within peer-to-peer communication (e.g., GIFs, emoticons).

The research also calls attention to the complexity of the media system and the need to approach empirical investigations of new media representation using interdisciplinary perspectives and foundations. On Instagram, mainstream media focused mainly on the size of the mobilization, which is typical for mainstream coverage and is considered delegitimizing. Yet the mainstream media also emphasized demands about one-third of the time, particularly those formal demands that aligned with the core agenda of the Women's March more than with an anti-Trump agenda.

The complexity extends to the often-undertheorized areas of alternative, ethnic, lifestyle, and online media producers, as well as the influence of individual people on social media. In this study, influencer posts most often contributed to the spectacle frame of positive emotional behavior and contributed the fewest mentions of the debate frame in the sample. Findings support critiques by Harlow and Johnson (2011) that the spectacle frame includes mentions of celebrities, who often provide media attractions/distractions rather than substantive protest information. However, beyond the paradigms' framing typology, individual influencer posts included a significant number of efficacy-eliciting features (solidarity and empowerment messages), messages that are more commonly found in the counterpublic spheres that reside in social

media networks than within the pages and broadcasts of traditional news media. More work on the psychology and production norms of media influencers would better inform our understanding of the patterns of media production in this space.

Despite the potential impact of influencers, the study finds that neither accounts nor post messages predict audience engagement. Importantly, the site algorithm’s prioritization of time, user engagement, and activity might have contributed to these conclusions. Nevertheless, these outcomes indicate that no one type of media producer had a stronghold on information production and distribution around this event, indicating the potential for a more balanced media power landscape within Women’s March coverage and media content on Instagram. The outliers allow us to draw other conclusions about opinion leaders on the network and the site culture. For example, Ariana Grande appeared several times in outliers removed from the regression analysis, indicating that her celebrity status on Instagram is elite and she does hold considerable influence over its audiences. Importantly, Grande’s posts included herself or others participating in the march, and more research is needed to account for the effects of message exposure from different media producers. For example, research might explore if the presence of celebrities further trivializes the tragedies that led to the grievances of the feminist movement or the Women’s March.

The implications of these confounding variables are important to develop theories related to media and social movements. Results suggest that the participatory nature of social media can contribute to the various, sometimes conflicting, representations of protests. However, the methodology of this study is limited in that it tracked only a portion of Instagram profiles; features present in the posts of the “ordinary” account holder are not represented in this study. Identifying differences across locations might provide insight about variations in Western and non-Western media production patterns (for those with access to Instagram or international events covered by media outlets). This study nevertheless expands the contextual foundations of previous work about the intersection of social media, news coverage, and audience engagement by including a wider variety of news producers.

Diverging from other analyses of protest news coverage in social media, the second innovation in this study is the examination of news posts rather than news articles. Finally, this work explores interactions on Instagram rather than the larger networks typically explored in media and political communication scholarship (i.e., Facebook and Twitter), and positions these findings within the network’s site culture and its contribution to feminist activism. In the context of a technology-centered fourth-wave feminism and the broad representation of social movements and social change, results contribute to growing conversations about how the deconstruction and redistribution of the power established in the fourth estate have led to a new paradigm of media representation.

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