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Skeptical Sisterhood: A Sociohistorical Analysis of Identity Arrangements and the Schism between Black and White Feminists

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Abstract

There are many factors that have contributed to differences between black and white feminists, such as racism within early women's movement groups, and white feminists' evasion of the race question as it relates to black women's rights. This article, however, looks at the group identity arrangements of black and white women on the meso-level that influence the development of the two feminist ideologies and their activism. It argues the existence of a process-like social phenomena that determines how the schism between black and white women occurs, beginning with the way in which black and white women arrange their group identities. These identity arrangements are responsible for the development of their group's feminist ideologies and activism, and the differences within them lead to contrasts within black and white women's feminist ideologies and activism. Such contrasts create issues between the two groups of women while attempting to work together in women's coalitions.

Introduction

After the exit polls from the 2016 presidential election revealed the polarizing results between white women and black women, Jamilah Lemieux, writer and the vice president of Men's and News Programming for InteractiveOne, penned her opinion on why she would not be participating in the Women's March held January 21, 2017. In her open letter she articulated,

> I've never felt anything remotely resembling sisterhood with White women. Friendship, affinity, fondness, love—sure. Sisterhood? Nah. That sense of loyalty, interconnectedness, accountability and shared struggle simply isn't there (Lemieux 2017).

This particular feeling is not new to black women who have felt throughout decades in America that there was no "shared struggle" or "interconnectedness" between the two groups of women.

Previous literature centered on the distinct feminisms of white and black women only scratch the surface in exploring the root of the issues between white and black feminist movements. However, the importance of this research lies in its exploration deeper into the fundamental beginnings of sociopolitical movements to uncover the sociological causes of discord between white and black feminists, their feminist ideologies, and their movements. To explore these factors, I propose to investigate two questions: First, what are the possible sociological causes for tumultuous relationships between white and black feminists, and second, what implications do these causes have for present and future coalition work between the two groups?

As aforementioned, the lack of shared political and social struggle with white women has been documented by black women throughout feminist history. Although the struggles of white and black women may have converged at different points throughout the history of feminist movements, the end goals were not similar. It is important to note that the end goals of black and white feminist movements were dependent upon and shaped by the presence of race–its privileges for some, and its consequences for others. Not only were the end goals for these distinctive movements ultimately influenced by race, but the fundamental ideologies upholding their movements and the arrangement of collective identities within the groups were important as well. This research will primarily focus on an arrangement of collective group identities in white and black feminist groups, their feminist ideologies and movements, and how these

ultimately lead to a schism between black and white feminists.

This body of work takes an interdisciplinary approach; fusing academic fields such as sociology, political science, and history. Furthermore, this research uses a mixed methodology, sociological theories, and an analysis of primary and secondary historical texts to frame the body of work. Black feminist theory was used as a guiding framework throughout the research to not only privilege the experiences of black women, but also because of the peculiar standpoint black women possess that gives them insider knowledge of social processes and phenomena. This standpoint and insider knowledge is a staple of black feminist theory and became integral within this research when analyzing and interpreting the historical texts.

Literature Review

Framing Processes

Social movement theorists define a social movement as a struggle over meanings and beliefs (Paxton and Hughes 2007). Scholars within this field have identified three interdependent factors that create a social movement: political opportunities, resource mobilization, and framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). This research will focus on the framing process within a social movement and how it can be influenced by the arrangement of collective group identity. Framing largely refers to a group's conceptualizing and meaning construction of the social movement in which it participates. In other words, framing becomes a negotiation of shared ideas, beliefs, and meanings in order to identify and define situations in need of change (Benford and Snow 2000). Framing also allows agents to identify areas within their lives they believe are problematic and plan strategic action in order to find solutions and act on them.

Most of the collective action that emerges out of the framing process is contingent upon culture and the saliency of the group identity or what the collective group has determined is most important based on its shared culture (Jasper 1997; Goodwin and Jasper 1999). According to these theorists, adding cultural materials to the framing process creates movements in which people become "consumers of existing cultural meanings and producers of new meanings" (Tarrow 1992). This research asks: What shared culture exists between white women and black women outside of having the same gender? Does gender work the same way for

white women and black women? Are there outside forces determining the way gender works for different women? These questions are important when analyzing even an aspect of feminism commonly assumed white and black women share. Identities such as gender, race, and sexuality, as well as factors like socioeconomic status and privilege, can be considered when a group collectively decides they are important. When these identities are framed they are then given the ability to produce new meanings in terms of ideologies and movement mobilization.

This research will attempt to link emergent ideologies and the meanings placed on the black and white feminist movements to the schism among black and white feminisms. Doing so will also allow the research to explain that a group's operationalization[1] out of the framing process determines the climate and relationship between groups as coalitions. Understanding the framing process can also help those researching women's coalitions search for deeper insight into how rifts can negatively affect relationships between women of different races, especially white and black women, on the meso level. It is important to note that the framing process is not similar to arranging identities. While group identity arrangement can take place during the framing process, it occurs when the collective group categorizes its identities in an array of distinct ways. As these theorists have argued, the framing process itself is a mechanism in which groups use these identities to determine areas in need of change that affect group members' lives in some manner.

Intersectionality and Identity Saliency

A common theme throughout this research is the idea of groups collectively arranging their identities. As aforementioned, these arrangements are influencers of the feminist ideologies that emerge out of the framing process which are then operationalized into distinct, sometimes conflicting, movements. While there are a myriad of ways for groups to arrange their identities, this research focuses on two: identity saliency and intersectionality.

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[1] Group operationalization is the process by which ideas materialize through the strategic planning and actions of an individual or group.

According to theorists that study Identity Theory, identity saliency occurs when identities are organized hierarchally with identities of most importance, or salience, situated at the top of the hierarchy and those with lesser salience and representation of self are located along the lower tier (Forehand, Deshpande and Reed 2002; Burke 1980; Callero 1985; Stryker 1968). These theorists gave little attention to how this particular arrangement of identities translates into ideologies and movements when they are framed. While there is an abundance of literature discussing the existence of identity saliency, there is little to no literature on the relationship between race and identity saliency on the meso level which provides an opportunity to contribute to filling in the gap.

There are some theorists, such as Peggy Thoits (1985), who have argued that factors such as age, sex, and race can overlap with social roles as they are transferred into social interactions, and such overlapping can produce role conflict and social strain (Thoits 1983). Her research states that as identities overlap they influence the nature of interactions between individuals. While Thoits' research is centered on the micro level of these interactions, we might ask what the overlap of these identities means for interactions between groups of women on the meso level?

Many black feminist scholars have introduced the idea of intersecting identities, or intersectionality of identities as they relate to black women and people of color (Crenshaw 1995; Settles 2006; Collins 2000). These identities intersect in such a way that the salience of one or more categories can influence the saliency of another, and can shape the experience of gender for women of color (Hurtado 1989). The "matrix of domination" as Patricia Hill Collins states, boils down to power structures for black women (Collins 2000). In other words, the intersections of identities located at the margins of power and privilege can open the doors for social and political colonization by groups with powers and privileges that transcend social, political, and economic institutions.

On a meso-level, producing shared meanings and beliefs of the world can strengthen the group. The conscious knowledge that intersectionality produces influences how black women approach the issues affecting their group. Black women's issues become multidimensional; therefore, these issues produce multidimensional feminist ideologies and ultimately multidimensional movements. Thus, intersectionality and the saliency of multiple identities constantly crossing one another depen-

dent upon social placements, becomes not only a permeating factor of knowledge, but a major mechanism in which black women interact with the outside world through these multidimensional movements. The role identity arrangement[2] plays within this research is integral and serves as a fundamental factor in the schism among black and white feminist groups in ideology and movement work.

Coalitions

Coalitions are contrasted with identity-based groups in that coalitions are formed across identity-based groups, and according to Reagon (1983), become spaces of difference, confrontation and risk. Patricia Hill Collins states we must be aware of forming coalitions out of oppression because of the contradictions that arise, such as privileges. Collins suggests that coalitions of activism must be formed only after each group comes to terms with the "multiple systems" of oppressions and privileges that shape our lives (Collins 1993). Thus, coalitions are formed because of shared necessity to achieve a common goal across identity-based groups (Matsuda 1991). In order to achieve coalitions that span across different social and cultural factors, but also have efficiency in making progress toward goals, Collins states there should be a reconceptualizing of identities as "categories of analysis" (Collins, 1993). We must therefore shift how we think about the nature of oppression in order to understand the connections among the identities that structure our lives.

Scholars studying women's coalitions have also considered the potential rewards and consequences of intersectionality, or the lack thereof, on the interconnection and interrelations of potential and formed coalitions (McCall 2005; Collins 2003; Vázquez 1993, 1997). Such rewards include a collective power in resistance of shared oppressions across those intersections that become coalitions themselves (Collins 2003), and women from various ethnic backgrounds examining the effects of male privilege and patriarchy in their own unique lives and strategically planning a front to combat the causes (Vázquez 1997). The lack of intersectionality or the

[2] Identity arrangement is a term I use to describe the process by which individuals or groups examine their identities, determine their saliency, and organize them in a manner that becomes beneficial to their everyday lives.

sense of interrelation as a minimum requirement for coalitions can become detrimental to the goals of those women on the margins of society due to loss of shared belief in a particular struggle or oppression (Collins 2003). When viewing intersectionality as a matrix of domination as Crenshaw and Collins have theorized within the black feminist framework, coalitions can be understood as forming due to separate groups having shared goals relating to unsatisfying areas of their lives (Crenshaw 1995; Collins 2003).

There is existing literature and research that looks at the relationship between black and white feminists and their movements, especially from a historical perspective. However, I found no literature that looks at the sociological cause for the schism between black and white women's coalitions in terms of group identities. Thus, my study aims to contribute to the larger body of literature by examining how race and racial privilege affect group identities, and in turn what implications those group identities have on activism. How group identities are structured, either as a hierarchy of saliency, or intersectionally, determines the operationalization of their social movements agreed upon during the framing process.

Differences in feminist ideologies can result in disagreements in movement strategies and overall goals when coalitions attempt to affect relationships between racial groups of women. This study focuses on women because of the longstanding history of American feminism and the many attempts at women's activism throughout history. Thus, my research hypotheses address the root of the process: group identity arrangement based on race. The first hypothesis states black women are more likely than white women to have racial identity saliency. The second hypothesis states black women are more likely than white women to have saliency of multiple marginalized identities that intersect. I hope to advance the current understanding of the differences and conflicts within black and white feminism by relying on an interdisciplinary approach to research that can enrich the sociology of the findings.

Data and Methods

This research includes the analysis of primary sources obtained from the University of Memphis Library. Also, this research uses interview data obtained by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) located at the University of Chicago in the 2014 General Social Survey dataset (hereafter GSS). The GSS is an annual survey distributed nationwide in which

participation is voluntary, offers multi-stage probability sampling, and is considered representative of the United States' population of adults (gss.norc.org). Within the 2014 GSS dataset, this research relies on a subset of 1,292 respondents within the total 3,842 respondents and chooses to analyze multiple relationships between the variables *Race of Respondent* [RACE], *Gender Saliency* [GENDSAL], and *Race Saliency* [RACESAL] while interchangeably layering the variables *Sex of Respondent* [SEX] and RACE.

Measures

The variable RACE is an independent variable that measures the self-identified race of the respondents. The values of the variable are characterized by the labels white, black, and other. Out of a total of 3,842 respondents, 75.5 percent identified as white, 15.2 percent as black, and 9.0 percent as other. Additionally, out of all female respondents, white women accounted for 73.7 percent and black women accounted for 18.0 percent.

The variable SEX is an independent variable that measures the self-identified gender of the respondents. Its value labels are male and female. Out of a total of 3,842 respondents within the dataset, 44.6 percent identify as male and 55.4 percent identify as female.

The variable GENDSAL is a dependent variable I recoded from the original variable R's *Gender is Important*, or IDSEXIMP. The original variable is an ordinal one that measures respondents' importance of gender from 0-10, with 0 characterized as 'Not at All' and 10 as 'Completely.' IDSEXIMP was recoded into GENDSAL by merging values 0-4 into the new recoded value '1 – No Importance,' the value 5 was recoded into value '2 – Somewhat Important,' and values 6-10 were recoded into value '3 – Very Important.'

The variable RACESAL is a dependent variable I recoded from the original variable R's *Race is Important*, or IDRACIMP. The original variable is an ordinal one that measures respondents' ranking of the importance of race from 0-10, with 0 characterized as 'Not at All' and 10 as 'Completely.' IDRACIMP was recoded into RACESAL by merging values 0-4 into the new recoded value '1 – No Importance,' the value 5 was recoded into value '2 – Somewhat Important,' and values 6-10 were recoded into value '3 – Very Important.'

Analytic Plan

To suggest any associations between the variables, first the dependent variable RACESAL was crosstabulated with the independent variable RACE while adding a layer for the variable SEX. This was done to assess the responses of groups by race and gender, only focusing on the responses from black women and white women. Next, the variable GENDSAL was crosstabulated with the variable RACE while adding a layer for SEX. Doing so allowed the research to analyze the percentage differences between black and white women's responses to the interview questions. A chi-square test was conducted to test the association between each crosstabulation. It is important to note the statistical procedure cannot account for intersectionality of multiple categories that could influence women respondents, especially black women. Thus, the research will depend more on the percentage differences between black and white women's responses, and sociohistorical analysis from primary texts.

Results

Table I displays the descriptive statistics for the independent, dependent, and recoded dependent variables used in the research. I found that most respondents believe gender is important in their lives, as there was a mean of 8.38 out of 10. I also found that respondents are seemingly neutral on the importance of race within their lives. Unlike gender, the mean was 5.95 when respondents were asked about the importance of race within their lives. The majority of respondents; however, were self-identified as white and female.

Table II is a crosstabulation of RACE and GENDAL and shows responses of females in percentages to measure the level of importance of gender within their lives. According to Table II, women across races believe gender to be of high importance in their personal lives. The data indicated that 87.2 percent of white women responded 'Very Important,' while 90.8 percent of black women and 85.0 percent of other minority women also responded 'Very Important' when asked about gender saliency. When analyzed as groups, particularly within black and white female respondents, the data suggests that both groups of women have a high saliency for gender as there was a percentage difference of 3.6 percent between their responses. According to the chi-square statistical testing ($X=51.080$, $P<.001$), the relationship between the variables GENDSAL

Variables	M	SD
Independent Variables		
RACE	1.33	.635
SEX	1.55	.497
Dependent Variables		
R's Gender is Important	8.38	2.34
R's Race is Important	5.95	3.497
GENDSAL (Recoded)	2.80	.508
RACESAL (Recoded)	2.26	.848

Table I. Descriptive statistics for all variables in analysis

Source: General Social Survey

and RACE is highly significant at the .001 level and corresponds with literature analyzing gender saliency in women's lives throughout waves of feminism. The Gamma value is .567 ($p<.001$) which suggests a moderate association between the race of the respondent and whether or not they believe gender to be important.

Table III is a crosstabulation of the variables RACESAL and RACE and shows the response percentages among female respondents measuring racial saliency within their lives. There is a significant difference across variables shown in the crosstabulation table. When asked if

Gender Saliency	White	Black	Other
Not Important	19 (3.4%)	7 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Somewhat Important	52 (9.4%)	5 (3.8%)	6 (15.0%)
Very Important	484 (87.2%)	118 (90.8%)	34 (85.0%)
Total	555 (100.0%)	130 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table II. Crosstabulation of RACE and GENDSAL

Source: General Social Survey [2014 Merged File], N=725

race is important in their lives, the responses among white women seem to be much more evenly spread among the response choices rather than heavily concentrated within one response as seen with the crosstabulation between GENDSAL and RACE. When RACESAL and RACE were crossed, only 47.2 percent of white female respondents responded 'Very Important,' while 25.2 percent responded 'Somewhat Important,' and 27.4 percent responded 'Not Important.'

This is a stark difference between the responses of black women and other women of color represented in the data. When asked if race is important in their lives, 71.5 percent of black women within the data responded 'Very Important,' 13.8 percent 'Not Important', and 14.6 percent for 'Somewhat Important'. With a 24.1 percentage difference between white and black women's responses for 'Very Important,' we can suggest that black women are more likely to assign a higher saliency for race than white women. According to the chi-square statistical testing ($X=66.919$, $P<.001$), the relationship between the variables RACESAL and RACE is highly significant at the .001 level. The Gamma value is .410 ($p<.001$) which indicates a moderate association between the two variables.

Race Saliency	White	Black	Other
Not Important	151 (27.4%)	18 (13.8%)	7 (17.5%)
Somewhat Important	139 (25.2%)	19 (14.6%)	3 (7.5%)
Very Important	261 (47.4%)	93 (71.5%)	30 (75.0%)
Total	551 (100.0%)	130 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table III. Crosstabulation of RACE and RACESAL

Source: General Social Survey [2014 Merged File], N=721

In order to integrate the data within the literature of intersectionality, we can analyze the two crosstabulation tables together. Although the GSS does not currently have variables relating to intersectionality and SPSS does not compute for intersectionality, these two tables when analyzed in relation to each other can give us further insight into group identity intersectionality.

Discussion

In order to discuss the results of the data collected in a holistic manner, the data tables must be interpreted in conjunction with one another to see and understand this research's assertion of black and white women having different arrangements of their identities on the meso level. It is equally important to rely on history while discussing the data findings to not only humanize the data, but to also show the reoccurrence of the schism among black and white feminist ideologies and movements throughout American feminist history. Thus, this research will focus on the Women's Suffrage Movement and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the Civil Rights Movement as historical examples.

The right to vote is viewed by some as the pinnacle of citizenship as an American. For Black Americans, the path to suffrage was a rocky, turbulent one filled with many pitfalls, especially for black women. Even while women were granted the right to vote by the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment on August 18, 1920, black women nationwide were not permitted to vote until the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. As the data and previous literature revealed, race influences the salience of both race and gender not only on the micro level, but also on the meso level within group identity. To go one step further, history reveals that it is the privileging and marginalization of race that determines how a group arranges its identities, and it reveals the consequences of such privileging or marginalization once it occurs within women's lives as they interact.

When analyzed as groups, particularly within black and white female respondents, the data suggests that both groups of women have a high salience for gender as there was a percentage difference of 3.6 percent between their responses. With a 24.1 percentage difference between white and black women's responses when questioned about race, we can also suggest that black women are more likely to perceive a higher salience of race than white women. The data suggests that white women see a higher salience for gender than race, which corresponds to the researcher's idea of black and white women having different fundamental arrangements of their group identities. Therefore, women arrange the salience of their identities within a hierarchy with gender receiving the most attention within the framing process.

On the meso level, the data suggests that both white and black women identify high salience for gender. History reveals the same on the topic of women's suffrage, as both black and white women during the early Twentieth century viewed voting rights as women's rights (Terborg-Penn 1998). The high saliency for gender spawned the women's club movement in which white women and newly freed black women formed coalitions for suffrage in a white, male dominated political sphere. Organizations such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association and American Equal Rights Association formed to give women the opportunity to lobby for suffrage together. However, decisions on strategy for achieving suffrage and even more importantly who receives suffrage varied across women within these organizations. All of these organizations

were faced with the "race question," and the question of suffrage on the intersection of race and gender formed strong opinions among white and black women (Terborg-Penn 1998).

When identities are arranged within a hierarchy while framing a movement, the identity situated at the top is the identity the group will most likely operationalize within the movement. Whichever identity is decided by the group as more important is taken into consideration over other identities. The data within this research suggests black women have high saliencies for both gender and race, as the majority of black women said that race and gender were both "very important" to them. This corresponds to the research hypotheses and the idea that their identities are arranged by intersectionality. In this case, the saliency of one identity influences the saliency of another identity. The interconnectedness of the identities equalizes their saliencies, and as a result the group has to consider and operationalize all the intersected identities. Therefore, intersectionality not only creates a multidimensional ideology of feminism, but when framed also creates multidimensional movements.

It is also important to discuss the differences between black and white women in the level of agency inferred from the data collected. Racial privilege protects white women from the unfortunate experiences that women of color experience and has the power of blinding the consequences of being a person of color. White women do not have to consider race in every aspect of life, which increases their agency in arranging their group identities. However, there is no agency with intersectionality for black women and other women of color because of the presence of two or more marginal identities. To simplify, identities are interdependent and equally salient; therefore, black women and other women of color cannot choose which identity is most salient in their lives due to the societal disadvantages inflicted upon them.

Historical Analysis

During the Women's Suffrage Movement, the difference is clear in how the salience of identities are arranged for white and black women. As stated previously, this can be attributed to the special privileges and consequences race brings, depending on whether one is a member of the dominant race or the subordinate race. The hierarchically arranged identities for white women in which gender was primary and race was pushed aside

proved detrimental to black women's hope for maintaining suffrage. White suffragists' saliency for gender and marginalization for women of color was clear in their organizations' distinguishing of "women's rights" and "negro rights" from one another (Terborg-Penn 1998). Black women, because their race is not privileged but instead marginalized, were not granted the luxury of simply ignoring race. Equipped with race consciousness, black women were aware of their white counterparts' dismissal of race and racism within the suffrage movement. As Frances Harper stated in 1869, fifty years before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, white women's saliency in the fight for not only suffrage rights but also human rights were "for sex, letting race occupy a minor position" (Terborg-Penn 1998).

To reiterate, the presence of racial privilege allowed white women to ignore the institution of race while strategizing for suffrage, and thus, led a movement for suffrage that was centered on gender and not race. In other words, the suffrage movement was a white women's movement. Although black women were integral to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, it would be forty-five years until black women received enfranchisement. By the sixties, a new wave of movements encompassing a demand for justice reform, voting rights, and civil rights had completely engulfed America and was later coined the Civil Rights Movement. Black and white women during this period of race relations again formed coalitions and networks in an attempt to achieve equality for people of color. However, the ideologies of the two groups of women stemming from the saliency of their identities were just as different as they were in early twentieth century.

A key similarity in white women's identities from the early twentieth century and the sixties was their lack in acknowledgement of racial privilege as a group. Just as the data collected in 2014 suggested white women, when asked if race was important to them, were split among their responses, so were they also during the Civil Rights Movement. To reiterate, 47.4 percent of white women responded that race is "very important" to them, 25.2 percent responded "somewhat important," and 27.2 percent responded that race is "not important." This is a stark difference in the responses that black women and other women of color gave in the data, as their responses were overwhelmingly saturated within "very important." The split among white women's feelings on race in the data is similar to that of the geographical split among white women during the Civil Rights

Movement. Most of the white women who volunteered to help during the Civil Rights Movement lived in northern states and traveled to the South to work with civil rights groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC. Most white women who were natives of the South harbored the traditional racist attitudes and beliefs toward the idea of equality and liberation for people of color (Breines 2006).

As stated previously, the presence of racial privilege and lack of racial consciousness allowed white women to center their framing process, feminist ideology, and movement solely on gender rights and to overlook the effects of race on black women's quest for equality and liberation. In the Sixties during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, racial consciousness had spread throughout the United States by way of knowledge and awareness of the grotesque treatment of black people and people of color. In spite of increased race consciousness, what happens when racial privilege progresses unchecked?

Analyzing the relationship between black and white women, particularly in the SNCC during the Civil Rights Movement, helps us further understand that although northern white women had become aware of the state of racial relations, their feminist ideology and the influence of racial privilege had not undergone much transformation since the Women's Suffrage Movement. White women's feminist ideology had not changed due to a number of reasons: first, as a group, the privileging of gender persisted within their group's identity arrangement and resulted in gender rights remaining as their main goal, and second, the presence of increased race consciousness does not necessarily equate to acknowledgement of racial privilege.

The relationship between white and black female students who participated in the SNCC, both during and after Freedom Summer in 1964, is a testament to the idea of white women's lack of knowledge in racial privilege. As Winifred Breines wrote in *The Trouble Between Us*, during and after Mississippi's Freedom Summer in 1964, the SNCC had grown exponentially. The once small organization made up of black students had grown from just 20 staff members in 1962 to over 200 staff members and around 250 volunteers in 1965, and the organization witnessed a 20 percent increase in white members. Many of these held leadership positions within the organizations (Breines 2006). Like many organizations, there were organizational issues that arose that became very political. Two

white, female students, Mary King and Casey Hayden, authored a paper addressing gender stratification within leadership positions of the SNCC in the fall of 1964. By 1965, the two women authored a paper titled, "A Kind of Memo: Sex and Caste." In the statement, the two white women compared the treatment of blacks in America to the way all women were treated as a whole in society (Breines 2006).

As the papers were distributed and became a part of the new meaning for radical, second-wave white feminism, it caused an uproar internally within the SNCC. It also damaged the relationship between black and white female members, since black female members felt the messages within the papers were counterproductive to the movement (Breines 2006). Black women were well aware of sexism and the issues concerning gender in the SNCC, but they were focused on justice and equality for people of color outside their organization. Breines (2006) later wrote, "White women were the ones who publicly raised gender issues in the SNCC, and the issues were embraced by white women elsewhere in the movement – which may have confirmed for black women that these were white women's concerns, or at least the narrow focus on gender was."

King and Hayden's memos subsequently cast a negative light on the SNCC among white feminists, and the attention to "male chauvinism" within the SNCC weakened the message and demand for equal rights, justice, and liberation for all people of color. The relationship between black women and white women within the SNCC never healed as black women were focused on the SNCC's original goals and felt white members were overlooking the racial matters at hand, as well as their own part in the rising racial tensions within the SNCC (Breines 2006). Ultimately, black women within SNCC did not necessarily disagree with white women's assessment of sexism, but felt adding a platform in their organization for the sexism all women faced was counterproductive to their movement on the issue of inequality on the basis of race.

The strained relationship between black and white women within the SNCC shows the differences in the goals and priorities of the two groups of women working together. The research again suggests that white women as a group arrange their identities within a hierarchy of importance (meaning white women have a higher saliency for gender than race). This causes not only racial issues to take a backseat, but also prevents white women from being fully aware of their own racial privilege. On the other

hand, black women, because of intersectionality, are aware of their social position at the margins of multiple identities and the consequences, subordination, and potential domination these intersections generate. Thus, black women must have salience for both gender and race and give their energy in organizing and fighting for the rights of both marginalized identities.

Conclusions and Limitations

Ultimately, this research found that the schism between black and white feminists is not only caused by the differences between the two identity arrangements, ideologies, and movements, but comes as a result of the amalgamation of these. Intersectionality goes beyond just the idea of intersecting identities. The crux of intersectionality as a theory lies in the domination and subordination on multiple levels that occurs at the margins of those intersecting identities. Therefore, intersectionality is identity arrangement rather than an experience that black women have the privilege of choosing.

Black women are born into at least two marginalized identities: being black and being female. The occurrences at the margin of this specific intersection are capable of producing dangerous consequences for black women mentally, emotionally, and even physically. The intersection of race and gender for black women also gives them a special vantage point on the inner workings of society that becomes special knowledge for survival. Intersectionality and the experiences it produces make race and gender for black women inseparable both in their daily lives and their activism within a collective group.

This study also found that identity saliency is present with white women's collective identity, but, in contrast to intersectionality, their identites are arranged within a hierarchy in which one identity is most important. The preferred ideologies also receive the most resources, which will be transformed into activism. I found that gender serves as the most salient identity to white women as a collective, unlike black women's identity arrangement in which race and gender are equally salient. This study found that race lacks saliency among white women's identities due to racial privilege. This lack of racial saliency is integrated within the white feminist ideology and stalls the development of racial consciousness while also limiting white women's acknowledgement of their racial privilege.

So, how do race and gender become polarizing for black women when working with white women? Almost identical with these research findings, history also reveals there is a split among white women concerning their feelings about the importance of race. This split within this group corresponds to the research's idea that due to their heavy saliency of gender, along with the presence of racial privilege, white women are able to choose when to allocate resources to activism regarding race. The inconsistency of racial saliency within white women's ideology and activism causes issues while working in coalitions with black women whose feminist ideologies and activism requires both gender and race to be equally salient.

The historical analysis of women's coalitions during the Women's Suffrage Movement and the Civil Rights Movement serve as examples of the inconsistency in white women's orientation towards race and the effects such inconsistency had on the relationship between black and white feminists. Although black and white women worked together in their efforts to gain suffrage, there was a split among white suffragists concerning race, with some fearful that black women receiving suffrage would increase the political power of black men. Other white women rejected the idea of complete enfranchisement of black people, while continuing to solicit the help of black women and generating black women's distrust of white women in the process. Forty-five years later, the distrust was still present as white women had been able to vote since the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment while voting rights were stripped from black women, and white women did not offer any help in maintaining black women's suffrage (Terborg-Penn 1998).

White women's inconsistency of racial saliency was present during the Civil Rights Movement as black and white female students participated in the SNCC. The relationship was strained as the white female members wanted to address what they perceived as sexism within in the organization and publicly, also anonymously, expressed their displeasure. The action taken by these members weakened the power and original platform of the SNCC, which focused on racial justice and equality for people of color, as second-wave white feminists began circulating the essays outlining the concerns of sexism within the organization. It was clear to the black women within the SNCC that although in the same organization, black and white women had separate priorities. The distrust grew so rapid-

ly that white members were later expelled from participating in the SNCC as the organization moved toward black nationalism under Stokely Carmichael's leadership (Breines 2006).

The rift among white and black feminists still exists in the present-day and was reflected in the exit poll data from the 2016 presidential election, in which more than half of white females voted for Donald Trump. The overwhelming majority of black women voted for his white, female opponent, Hillary Clinton–a stark difference. The distrust was apparent from the writings of many black female scholars who theorized how such a split vote could occur among white women. Sociologically explaining the rift between white and black feminists while incorporating identity theory and social movement theory was formally unchartered territory and warranted attention.

Future research relating to this study can benefit from incorporating qualitative research methods including focus groups and in-depth interviews with women from various racial backgrounds self-identified as feminists. Researchers may also want to consider expanding the variables to include age, socioeconomic status, and even sexuality to add multidimensions to women's identity and the effect the variables may have on white and black feminist ideologies. Lastly, future researchers examining the relationship between black and white feminists can advance this study by increasing the sample size of the data to better represent the population size of black and white women.

Recommendations for Women's Coalitions

Many black women were left wondering after the 2016 presidential election if working with white women to achieve equality would be conducive to the health and success of their own struggles for equality and justice. Phrases such as "Listen to black women," and "Follow black women" began to ring out from white feminists in an attempt to heal from the election. Although these suggestions from white women seem like a basic starting point for repairing the relationship between white and black feminists, they can be dangerous to the mental, emotional, and even physical health of black women when put into practice. Therefore, I am providing recommendations for present and future multiracial women's coalitions in the Trump era and beyond.

First, and most importantly, white women must acknowledge their

white privilege and believe it is real in its rewards when attempting to work in coalitions with women of color. This acknowledgement will allow them to realize that there are certain aspects of life regarding race and gender they may not understand because of the influences and protections white privilege affords to their racial group. Secondly, it is important to know that black women did not create race or gender, and they are not the engineers of the various forms of racism and sexism. Therefore, it is not the responsibility of black women to end racism or sexism. While phrases such as "Listen, follow, and trust black women" are beneficial in terms of strategy, black women should not be the ones to risk their health by placing their bodies on the frontline in a fight they had no part in creating. Lastly, when participating in coalitions with black women and women of color, white women should make it a goal for their collective group to be united under the common purpose and ideas of the organization in which they belong. When one group is divided, it weakens the power of the entire organization and creates a space for tension, infighting, and distrust.

I have hope that white and black feminists, and women who don't identify with the feminist ideology, can unite and work together to form powerful women's coalitions that enact change for the improvement of society. The best strategy for white women to achieve effective coalitional work with black women and other women of color is to learn as much as possible about other women, their struggles, their pains, and their triumphs. Doing so can begin the process of healing and allow greater cooperation among women. Ultimately, together we are greater than the sum of our parts.

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