

SOCIAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH ADVOCATES IN SOCIAL

MEDIA

A Thesis

by

ROWAN ANGEL COOPER

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Chair of Committee,	Corliss Outley
Committee Members,	Scott Shafer
	Jane Sell
Head of Department,	Scott Shafer

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ABSTRACT

Identity development among youth is an essential competency in order for youth to continue to grow into fully successful adults. Since the introduction of social media to the Internet in the late 1990s, youth have begun to have the opportunity to develop their identities in these virtual spaces. Recently there has been an increase in discussion around this process as youth increasingly spend more time on social media. Further research suggests youth are engaging in identity development through posting on social media applications (Ward, 2017). This can be important to understand when trying to understand the motivations behind social media use and how it may have long lasting effects on an individual's development of their inner self. Following the 2018 Parkland shooting, there has been a national focus on youth using social media for the use of social and political activism. This leads to questions such as: Do youth understand what activism is? How do they present themselves as activists on the internet? Do their peers' opinions and reactions effect what and how they post their ideas on their cause? This study will explore the ideas and concepts of how youth are using social media and their peers to create and maintain an identity in the area of political and civic identities. This form of identity is especially important in the time period of adolescence as they navigate their perception of themselves and how they fit into society.

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Contributors

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NOMENCLATURE

SNS	Social Networking Site
ICT	Internet Communication Technology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of social media in the late 1990's, people across the world have been using it to communicate and share ideas (Hendricks, 2003). Social media are online platforms that are designed to encourage interaction among users. These platforms do this by allowing users to create and expand their network online through chat programs, profiles, and other unique features (Boyd, & Ellison, 2012/2012). There are three main services a site must allow individuals to use in order to be considered a social networking site. These services are “construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others in the system” (Boyd, & Ellison, 2012/2012, pg. 492). The first recognized social media was a website titled Six Degrees, which was created in 1997 (Boyd, & Ellison, 2012/2012). From this initial site began an expansion in the creation of Myspace, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and many more platforms that are still being created and modified today. Social media has become such an integral part of everyday life that people generally spend several hours a day sharing, viewing, and posting (Hendricks, 2003).

While most adults did not grow up with this technology at their fingertips, this is not true for most youth today (Turner, 2015). According to a recent study, 45% of youth reported they are online on a near constant basis (Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 28). Further, 95% of the youth surveyed stated either they have a smartphone, or they have access to one (Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 28). This speaks to the pervasive nature of social media and the new interactive technologies on the market. Additionally, when asked about what impact youth perceive social media to have on their life, several benefits and consequences were highlighted.

In a similar study, 81% of youth feel more connected with their friends and 16% claim they use social media to find news and information (Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 30; Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 28). While these positives can allow youth to connect with others in a non-physical setting, this can also lead to negative interactions as well. According to the same studies as discussed before, 37% of youth feel pressured to post content their peers would apply “likes”, and comment; 27% of youth report bullying and rumor spreading as a negative outcome from social media use (Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 30; Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, November 28).

During the time spent online, youth may browse other users’ feeds or create their own posts. However, this is not the only use of social media. Youth have the opportunity to access new information, connect with their family, friends, and new contacts, build social capital, and learn about current events (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2014). Through this time spent online socializing with their peers and building social capital, youth may also find themselves endeavoring to measure their self-worth in relation to their peers and their peers’ acceptance (La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers, 2014). Further, youth may use their online networks and the size of these online networks as a measure of their social standing, as they measure their social capital with the number of peers with which they are connected and how these peers see them (La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers, 2014).

It is common for adults and youth to post about their experiences and thoughts online. Individuals also validate those experiences and thoughts through the act of posting and the attention or feedback their peers give these posts (Boyd, 2007). Many youth stress over the number of views, likes, and comments their posts receive, which may influence their perceptions of their overall thoughts and feelings (Blease, 2015). Although research has placed a large

emphasis on the effects of using social media in youth populations and endeavoring to understand what continues to motivate youth's use of social media, there is still an ample amount of research needing to be done as social media is continuously changing and bringing new research areas to light. One such area that could be expanded upon in research is the concept of identity development through these online platforms.

Research suggests that youth are engaging in identity development through posting on social media applications (Ward, 2017). This can be important to understand when trying to understand the motivations behind social media use and how it may have long lasting effects on an individual's development of their inner self. With the posts they write, they could be attempting to elicit their peers' affirmations in the form of feedback, such as likes, comments, or shares (Ward, 2017). A recent study found the more feedback or affirmations a user received, the more they internalized "likes" as a measure on their self-worth, and social standing (La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers, 2014). In the period of adolescence, peer perceptions are important in youth understanding where they fit in regard to the society of their peers (Ward, 2017).

Summary and Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how youth activist construct their identity through their social media usage. While previous literature has studied the motivations behind the use of social media and the effects of how social media can affect youth populations, they do not observe the process in which youth use social networking sites as a tool and a mode of identity development. To measure identity development this study will evaluate four cases of youth advocates in their process of becoming political and social advocates for change. Therefore, the research questions for this study are:

1. How do youth activists construct their respective identities on Twitter?

2. How do youth come to identify with their respective activist community? That is, *how* and not *why* the activist identity was formed. (identity control)
3. How the youth activist identity is maintained, revised and expanded. (social exchange)

Significance of the Study

Social media is a vast and large area of study; however, much research is founded on how social media may affect youth participants, and not so much how they may be using these technologies. Further social media has become a context within which youth and use every day. Recently, there has been a shift to viewing the internet as a platform where youth can develop a sense of self-worth and social capital among their peers (La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers, 2014).

In the past year, there has been a national focus on youth using social media for the use of social and political activism after the occurrence of the Parkland shooting in February 2018. This leads to questions such as: Do youth understand what activism is? How do they present themselves as activists on the internet? Do their peers' opinions and reactions effect what and how they post their ideas on their cause?

This study will explore the ideas and concepts of how youth are using social media and their peers to create and maintain an identity in the area of political and civic identities. This form of identity is especially important in the time of adolescents as they navigate their perception of themselves and how they fit into society. This will be done using a content analysis of several youth activists Twitter feeds.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction:

When studying youths' use of social media and how it affects identity development and youth perceptions of self, there are three theories that can further explain what youth post, and how they feel about these behaviors. These theories are Social Exchange Theory, Erikson's (1968) Identity Development Theory, and Identity Control Theory. By using these theories in relation to social media and youth, it can be better understood how social media can influence youths' identity development, their perceptions of peers' acceptance; and therefore, their perception of self. Civic engagement and civic identity are components of identity. According to Erikson, this component of identity development is important during the stage of adolescence (Yates, & Youniss, 1998; Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014; Kirshner, 2007).

Development of Identity among Youth.

Youth development is a field designed to understand youth and help them develop into successful adults. A formal definition of youth development offered by Melvin Delgado (2002) is:

“Youth development is an ongoing process in which young people are engaged and invested. Throughout this process young people seek ways to meet their basic physical and social needs and to build the competencies and connections they need for survival and success...Youth Development is marked by the acquisition of a broad range of competencies and the demonstration of a full complement of connections to self, others, and the larger community” (Pg. 9).

The competency youth development programs strive to instill in youth are competencies such as self-control, positive sense of self, positive decision-making skills, moral beliefs system, and prosocial connections (Guerra, & Bradshaw, 2008). These competencies and others are believed to help youth grow into successful adults.

Developing competencies such as a positive sense of self connects to youth understanding their self-worth and the positive prosocial connections help youth related to their social standing and social capital. Both of these competencies are important as youth progress into adulthood and the development of their identity throughout their youth.

By the previous definition, youth development can occur in many settings with a variety of people to help achieve some of the competencies discussed previously and connection youth need. Youth development can be found in a number of youth-serving agencies, but is most often connected to out-of-school time programs such as sports, mentoring, and art. There is an argument that youth development is not limited to these contexts (Delgado, 2002). Other positive youth development programs that are less discussed are religious programs and camps, juvenile correctional recreation programming, STEM programs and many others. As long as the programs and organizations aim to create and implement programs that help youth grow into fully functioning adults by learning the competencies discussed previously, there are grounds to label that program as a form of youth development.

Identity Development is another example of a critical competency youth need to develop in order to understand themselves and the role they play in their community, and society overall. Individuals are continuously developing their identities as they interact with their environment (Goffman, 1959). Marcia (2017) defines identity as “as a self-structure-an internal, self-

constructed abilities, beliefs, and individual histories, dynamic organizations of drives,” (pg. 109). While Marcia tends to have a more of an individual focused definition, Jenkins offers more of a social definition in defining through relationships (Marcia, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). Jenkins (2014) defines identity as “the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectivities,” (pg. 18).

The relationships youth have effect how they view themselves and their role in relation to others and society. For example, a recent study found that youth who have high levels of parental trust are positively associated with synthesis of identity and negatively associated with identity confusion (Sugimura, Crocetti, Hatano, Kaniušonytė, Hihara, & Žukauskienė, 2018). Another study found that youth internalize harmful messages from their peers and incorporate these messages into the development and views of their own identity (DeLay, Martin, Cook, & Hanish, 2018). A study done on adolescent identity development in foster care also discusses the impact relationships can have on a youth’s self-view and self-concept as they internalize how people interact with them (Kools, 1997).

Erikson’s Stages of Identity Development (1968) explains how identity development occurs throughout an individual’s life. Erikson (1968) discusses how identity occurs in stages corresponding to life stages. Within each of these stages a person evaluates who they are based on characteristics and makes decisions regarding the changes they are encountering. He argues that each crisis occurring in a life stage must be resolved positively in order to continue to progress through life (Arnold, 2017). Each identity developed in the stages helps build on the next identity crisis the youth will encounter.

The first crisis encountered is in the infancy years, the crisis is evaluating trust versus mistrust. When evaluating this, children learn the continuous nature of their mother's presence and their responsibility to the infant. The mothers are there for reassurance as well as assurance the infant's' basic needs are met. When the child experiences this over time, they develop a sense of trust that the mother will always be there when needed. However, once the weaning process begins, the infant senses the loss of this connection and begins to develop a sense of mistrust if the mother does not supplement these needs (Erikson, 1968). This stage can reflect on how youth understand who they can count on in later years and how those relationships can positively influence the youth.

The next life stage is toddlerhood, where the crisis is autonomy versus shame. In this stage, children are learning to do more by themselves and become upset when they cannot. This is also a time for them to learn how to self-regulate and become self-conscious (Erikson, 1968). Autonomy refers to the sense of independence of being able to complete tasks on their own. This is seen in the stage of toilet training, the use of terms such as "I" and "mine", and the development of their muscles to do more activities by themselves such as walking. Shame is the feeling of doubt in their ability to continue to perform these tasks autonomously (Erikson, 1968). While the first stage was about the perceptions of the child's emotions in regard to others, the second stage is more focused on how the youth feels about themselves and their abilities in regard to others.

Preschool years are when the crisis of initiative versus guilt occurs. In this stage, children are continuing to develop through task accomplishment and learning to feel negatively if they do not perform as expected. Children often learn about the many possibilities of their

roles through intrusions of other's space and other's thoughts and opinions. In this stage, children develop a sense of gender through watching their parents, as well as interacting with other youth through preschool programs or daycares. They also begin to understand the concept of loss through interacting with other children and potentially the addition of younger siblings. Through the introduction of these interactions, youth often feel the negative feelings they develop which can be considered guilt (Erikson, 1968). In this stage, children are often seen playing games to practice the roles they have seen and can have outbursts of emotion regarding negative emotions at not achieving these goals. This stage builds on the previous stage of the perception the youth holds based on how others see them.

Childhood is focused on the crisis of industry versus inferiority. In this stage, children are now in schooling systems where they are learning academic skills such as reading and math. The sense of industry children are endeavoring to develop in this stage is "being able to make things and make them well and even perfectly" (Erikson, 1968, pg. 123). This desire is seen in the classroom trying to achieve the goals adults set before them and in their play in trying to perfectly replicate their future career goals such as a teacher or police officer. However, the children have to work to perform these roles in what they perceive as perfect and feel upset when they do not fully achieve them.

Adolescence is focused on the crisis of identity versus role confusion. This is seen in how youth may feel a role has been forced upon them and how this differs from what they feel is their true identity. This may cause youth to try different identities and act out in opposition to the role they have been assigned (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence is a time that youth make more risky decisions due to the developmental stage of their brains and bodies as they progress through

puberty (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2014). In this stage youth are likely to ‘try on’ different identities in order to progress through this stage’s crisis.

The next three stages are in regard to adulthood, how individuals continue to modify and develop their identities throughout their lifetime. The next stage is late adolescence, also known as early adulthood. In this stage, the crisis is of intimacy versus isolation. Individuals in this stage need to have accomplished the previous stages in order to fuse their identities together. If this is not done, the individual will struggle in this stage and it could push them to avoid intimate and sexual relationships and cause the individual to distance. The process of distancing is where the individual may isolate and destroy relationships and other forces that could harm them (Erikson, 1968). If they have accomplished the previous crises, they will be more likely to reach out and pursue these intimate relationships.

The next stage occurs in adulthood with the crisis of generativity versus stagnation (Erikson, 1968). This stage is the difference in the sense of “guiding the next generation (pg. 138), and not accomplishing this sense of accomplishment which can lead to a sense of boredom” (Erikson, 1968). Generativity does not have to be accomplished by having one’s own children but can be accomplished through other means that can help the next generation. This stage can allow the individual to feel fulfilled as they assist in moving the next generation to be successful.

The final life stage of aging adulthood is met with the crisis of integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1968). In this stage, the individual has accomplished much in their previous life stages and they begin to accept the inevitable and reflect on the accomplishments of not only their life but also those that come before and after them. In Erikson's words, he defines this sense of

accomplishment and sense of responsibility as integrity (1968). However, as with all the other stages, there is a crisis in this stage. Despair is the feeling that life is too short and there is no time to try to change things so they can accomplish the sense of integrity. Despair can be presented in the form of disgust and anger towards individuals or institutions (Erikson, 1968). These two sides of the crisis present the accumulated success or weaknesses from the previous crises.

Table 1 Erikson’s Stages of Identity Development (Erikson, 1968)

Stage	Age	Crisis
Infant	0 to 18 Months	Trust vs. Mistrust
Toddler	18 Months to 3 Years	Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt
Preschool	3 to 6 Years	Initiative vs. Guilt
Childhood	6 to 12 Years	Industry vs. Inferiority
Adolescence	12 to 18 Years	Identity vs. Identity Confusion
Late Adolescence/Early Adulthood	18 to 40 Years	Intimacy vs. Isolation
Adulthood	40 to 65 Years	Generativity vs. Stagnation
Maturity	65+ Years	Integrity vs. Despair

These stages continue to build upon each other and provide youth a continuous development of their perception of self and their identity. Within adolescents, they are evaluating

their values and morals, and beginning to develop their sense of self in regard to their own perceived identity and the roles they have been assigned (Benn, 2017).

Youth Development and Identity Development

Arnold (2017) offers three implications of identity development in youth development programs: youth development supports possible exploration of identity, identity formation is developmental (Erikson, 1968), identity development is expected and youth development recognizes the multiple contexts that could influence this identity formation.

Youth development and Exploration of Identities.

The first implication is that youth development supports opportunities for youth to explore possible identities. Youth development programs often offer youth new experiences and personal interactions they would not have otherwise been exposed (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang, & Noam, 2006) by providing context where youth experience these new situations and providing them a safe place to feel comfortable trying out different versions of themselves. One study found youth used youth programs to try out different activities and skill sets, which then aided them in understanding their own limits as individuals and where their strengths lie (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003).

Identity Formation and Youth Development

The next implication being that identity is developmental has previously been stated in the discussion of Erikson's (1968) stages of identity. Youth development is a process that supports youth throughout their development into adulthood (Delgado, 2002); this includes the stages of identity development they go through as they progress through childhood and adolescence. It is important to address the biological changes encountered, as well as the social changes.

Identity Development in Multiple Context.

The final implication Arnold (2017) discusses is how youth development's role in identity development through youth development programs is they recognize the impact of multiple contexts can have on a youth as they develop. Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur (2002) recommend youth development programs "focus on interactions with family, school, neighborhood, society, and culture contexts" (pg. 233) in order to further aid youth in their search of their identity.

Youth Activism Development

As youth are developing, they are continuing to develop their identities in a number of areas in their lives (Rubin, 2007). They do so in the number of contexts they encounter through school, families, and youth activities. As youth are developing, they begin to evaluate who they are based on these interactions. One of the areas youth begin to learn about in the school setting is civic responsibility and civic engagement (Rubin, 2007). This introduction to ideas such as civic engagement and civic responsibility allows youth to question their own identities in regard to these concepts.

Civic engagement is defined by Rubin (2007) as "participation in civic institutions through formal means, such as voting, and informal means, such as following current events and discussing politics with friends and family" (pg. 450). While this definition captures the basic concept of civic engagement, it could be further developed through understanding the means youth use in order to practice and perform these formal and informal actions. The previous definition also lacks the new developments of youth engaging in activism via online channels.

While previous research does question the effectiveness and the power new internet

technologies, such as internet communication technology (ICT), have in creating social change, they do agree that ICTs do influence social movements and their spread (Hara, & Huang, 2011). In order to understand civic engagement by youth, it is important to understand that youth may use ICT such as social media to practice these informal methods of civic engagement by following current events and to express political thoughts or ideas (Rubin, 2007).

While youth may encounter these concepts in their educational system, Erikson (1968) in his stages of identity theory also discussed political commitment as important in the stage of adolescence (Yates, & Youniss, 1998; Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014; Kirshner, 2007). Within this stage of adolescence youth are determining what ideologies they, themselves, believe and wish to pursue into their adult lives (Yates, & Youniss, 1998). This is because youth are at the stage where they can question how they fit into society, what role they may be playing currently, and what role they would like to play as they grow into adulthood.

Youth development allows youth the opportunity to move through these difficult processes and decisions while providing them the opportunity to engage with peers and supportive adults. They can help youth in understanding how they fit into society and allow them to interact with others in discussing civic engagement topics such as current events and political processes.

As youth increase their understanding of civic engagement, how civic policies and processes can affect them, they may become more interested in being active participants in civic processes. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) explain three different levels of citizenship. The first being a personally responsible citizen. This individual believes that by being of good character they can assist in solving social problems (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). The next level is a participatory citizen. At this level an individual believes social change to come about through actively

participating in the structure around them, by voting or taking a leadership position (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). The final level of citizenship is a justice-oriented citizen. This individual understands that in order to make social change in society they must question and work toward change in the existing organizations and structures (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Activism is a way a justice-oriented citizen can make these changes. Activism is when a person or a group of people act in a way to influence or change corporate or government policies and/or actions (Olsson, & Hysing, 2012; McFarlane & Hunt, 2006).

Women's Movement Through History

Activism has played roles in politics and corporate policies for much of history. However the role of women in activism and women's rights is an area of particular interest as it has highlighted and fought against many policies that have affected women and their success throughout history.

While women's activism and the women's movement can be traced further than the beginnings of the American Revolution in other parts of the world, this paper will only focus on the women's movement in the United States. During the beginnings of the nation, several women's rights actions were made. Notably Abigail Adams asked her husband to "think of the women," in a letter during the time he was assisting in writing documents that would be the bedrock of the beginnings of The United States (History, 2009). Additionally, in 1848 the first women's right convention was held in New York where the Declaration of Sentiments was signed (Stanton & Mott, 2002; Kerber, 1977). Several other notable events occurred before the development of the Suffrage Movement in the early 1900s. Sojourner Truth, evangelist and civil rights activist, gave her famous "Ain't I a Woman" speech in 1851 at a women's rights

convention where she highlighted the discrimination she faced as a black woman (Siebler, 2010). Finally, in 1869 Wyoming became the first territory and later state to pass a law to allow women political power, giving them the freedom to vote and hold office (Larson, 1965).

These events helped lead to the Suffrage Movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This movement began with the founding of the National Woman Suffrage Association, which focused on obtaining women's right to vote through a Congressional Amendment in the Summer of 1869 (Imbornoni, 2006). Additionally, in the fall of 1869, the American Women Suffrage Association was founded to obtain women's right to vote via state constitutions. These two organizations would eventually join to create the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890 (Imbornoni, 2006). In 1890, Colorado became the first official state to adopt an amendment to allow women the right to vote. By 1918, 15 more states had passed similar amendments (Imbornoni, 2006). Another political accomplishment was Jeanette Rankin being the first woman sworn into Congress as a member of The House of Representatives in the year of 1917 (History channel). The final event that sealed women's right to vote was the passing of the 19th Amendment, based off the amendment Susan B. Anthony (original founder of the National Woman Suffrage Associate) wrote was passed by Congress and The House of Representatives in 1920 (Imbornoni, 2006; History, 2009).

While this was the first step for women to receive equal rights as men politically, there were still disparities in the workplace, the home, and the education system. In 1903, the National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) was founded to fight for better wages and working environments for women (Imbornoni, 2006). This would be only the first movement to fight for social equality for women, soon followed by many others that would pave the way for the Equal

Pay Act in 1963, which prohibits employers from paying a woman less than a man for the same job (Imbornoni, 2006). Additionally, President John Kennedy created the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, to ensure women could succeed in the workforce through paid maternity leave and affordable childcare (Imbornoni, 2006).

During this time, the Civil Rights Movement was also involved, oriented toward providing black men and women the same rights as white men and women. Many activists sparked this movement, but Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on a city bus in 1955 is a pivotal moment for the Civil Rights movement and the Women's Rights Movement. Following the Civil Rights movements, Title VII was passed that prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on gender or race (Imbornoni, 2006; History, 2009).

Once again, a victory won for women's rights through the passing of the two previously mentioned laws. However there was still disparities in the rights men had and the rights women had, for example, the Reproductive Rights. It was not until 1921 that the American Birth Control League was founded which would later lead to Planned Parenthood (Imbornoni, 2006). It would be 39 years later that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would approve birth control pills in 1960, giving women the opportunity to have easier access to contraception (Imbornoni, 2006). In 1965, the final law prohibiting the use of contraceptives by married couples was struck down in the *Griswold v. Connecticut* case (Imbornoni, 2006).

However, another battle had just begun with the Educational Rights for women. In 1972, President Nixon passed the Title IX Act of the Education Amendments, which prohibits the discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program that receives federal funding (Imbornoni, 2006). Among other changes, this would lead to a surge in women's sports.

Women of Color and Activism

As highlighted already, women of color have played a large role in advocating for their rights, not only as women, but also as people of color. One of the earliest women of color activists was Sojourner Truth, who gave her famous “Ain’t I a Woman” speech in 1851 (Siebler, 2010). During her speech, she articulates the oppression she faces in being a woman but also a person of color and how those two identities lead to her rights being treated or mistreated. Shortly after her speech, the National Association of Colored Women was found in 1896 combining more than 100 black women’s organizations for the purpose of activism (Imbornoni, 2006). Moving forward to 1935, the National Council of Negro Women combined several black women’s organizations that focused on lobbying against job discrimination (Imbornoni, 2006). In 1955, Rosa Parks stood up for herself and made a statement for the Civil Rights movement in her refusal to give up her seat for a white man on a city bus. These important women of color in history have set precedents on the roles that gender and race play in oppression both by themselves and together. Additionally, the movements made by these women continue to inspire women of color today to openly discuss and fight against the infringements they face daily.

Powerful Women Moments

While many advances were made in women’s rights in the past decades, paved by women activist who strived to enact policies at the national and state level, there are also women who benefited from these policies and in turn became role models and figureheads of the success of these movements. Rosa Parks and Amelia Earhart, the first woman pilot, are two examples of women changing the way women are viewed. They are followed by other women such as Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman sworn into the United States Supreme Court, Sally Ride, the

first woman in space, Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to run as a Vice President nominee for a major party, Janet Reno, the first woman sworn in as Attorney General, Madeleine Albright, the first woman Secretary of State, Nancy Pelosi, the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House, Hillary Clinton, the first woman elected to serve as the primary candidate for a major political party for the Presidential election (History, 2009).

These women and their success have continued to ignite the passion for what women can achieve. Most recently, the midterm election of 2018 saw 90 women elected to political positions, many of whom were the first women in these positions (Cooney, 2018). These women today are encouraging the same passion the older generation of women's rights activists might have given them. Today, there are young women watching as women continue to pursue change.

Female Empowerment and the Internet

There has been discussion about whether or not the feminist movement that was fought in the sixties and seventies is dead and has moved into a new stage called post-feminism (Schneider, 1988; McRobbie, 2004). This new wave of feminism is argued to undermine the past advances that were made by the previous feminist movements; however, this study argues that these previous studies do not consider the role social media plays in empowering young women to pursue activism. Recently there has been a surge in activism using internet as the medium, because youth in particular are comfortable and familiar with this technology. Social media has encouraged activism through the nature of creating networks and communicating with these connections. By using social media women and girls may now create movements and become influencers by reaching mass audiences in a short amount of time. This access and power could

potentially lead to a shift in how the female population sees themselves and how they develop their identity online.

Youth, Identity and Social Media Use

The recent field of youth development has begun to examine more thoroughly the role social media has in the development of identity among youth. The connection between the importance of youth development and how identity affects this process has garnered wide attention. As social media is ever changing, it is important to research how youth are using it now, so that as social media continues to change research can endeavor to try to keep up with how youth are using these platforms for identity development and connections with peers.

Social media allows youth the opportunity to interact with all the youth development programs, without the barrier of needing a physical space to do so. Therefore, as previously discussed, with the importance of relationships in creating an identity, social media allows for the continuous creation and development of a youth's identity in their relationships and interactions with peers, family, and adult mentors. Without this virtual tool and interface youth, would have less of an opportunity to develop their identity with the different relationships they may have.

Social media is a prime context for youth to test identities through virtual socialization with their peers (Benn, 2017). Youth are now able to design their social media posts to reflect what identity or identities they are using at the time (Boyd, 2008). Youth continue to use their peers' feedback to alter their behaviors on social media platforms and therefore adjusting the identity they wish to present rather than the roles they feel assigned (La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers,

2014). Ward (2017) posts that youth who have weak peer relations could be negatively affected when using social media to develop a coherent sense of self or identity.

Given the design of social media and how youth have the opportunity to receive immediate feedback from their peers on their posts, youth now have a virtual tool to help them test identities. As youth continue to use these tools to grow their network and social capital with their peers, they continue to grow the number of individuals from whom they can receive this feedback. Not only that, but social media activity continues to be a trendy and popular activity for youth, making it a more desirable passtime for youth to use.

Theoretical Framework

These concepts are be evaluated using two theoretical frameworks, *Identity Control Theory* and *Social Exchange Theory*. These two theories discuss how individuals interact and make decisions in regard to their relationships and interactions with others. These two theories allow insight on how individuals may use social networking sites in order to develop identities and manage these identities.

Identity Control Theory:

One identity theory that may be found within youth's use of social media is *Identity Control Theory*. By understanding how this theory explains identities, their creations, and effects, it can lead to further understanding of social media use.

Burke's (2006) identity control theory explains the importance of identity and the development of an "identity standard" or accumulation of meanings that symbolize an important role. According to the theory, people are constantly assessing how the feedback they receive

either fits or doesn't fit their identity standard. The identity loop begins with the actor's social behavior related to his or her identity. This is considered the identity standard as seen in the top of *Figure 1*. The perception of self is a reflection of previous interactions and how the actor adjusted their identity based on these interactions (Burke, 2006). A disruption would be when the actor encounters a person or a situation where the perception of self is challenged. This can be through an action or an interaction with another individual or group. This occurs in the output or the action of the identity and the reflection (seen in the bottom half of *Figure 1*), of the response the actor receives from the others with whom they interact (Burke, 2006). Disruptions occur when an individual attacks an actor's present identity, or attacks the group identity with which the actor identifies. Disruptions can also occur when actors themselves do not perform in a way that reflects their current identity standard.

Most youth typically believe they will be accepted by their peers (Blease, 2015). They then perform social behavior they believe is appropriate for that identity, such as posting pictures of the activities and places they have been. Once the actor has completed the social behavior the act will be evaluated based on the environmental factors and reflected upon by both the actor and other people, such as the activity that is on the post (Burke, 2006). Once the behavior is reflected upon, then perceptions will form based on the appraisals. For example, if there are many likes, comments, and shares on a post, the perception will be that this child is well accepted by their peers. The actor will then compare the perceptions to the identity and modify their behavior to either alter the perceptions or continue to enforce the behavior to fit the identity. This final view of the identity is the comparator of the initial identity standard seen in the top of *Figure 1* (Burke, 1991). Consequently, either they would continue to post pictures of their

activities or post different pictures, they believe will meet the requirements of the identity. The loop process will begin again (Burke, 2006).

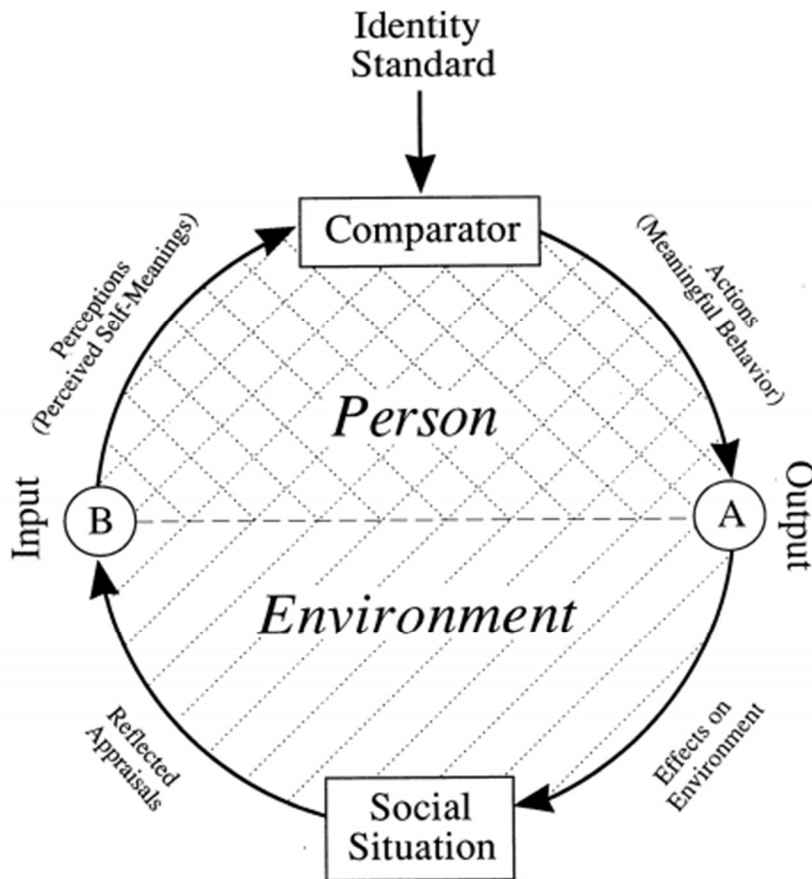


Figure 1 Identity Control Theory (Burke, 1991)

Social Exchange Theory:

Social Exchange Theory posits that actors are self-interested and are seeking interaction with three or more actors (Lawler, et al, 2015). A large component of social exchange theory is the rewards and punishments as seen as a scale in *Figure 2*, when actors are rewarded through

social interactions, they become more comfortable with the action as the risk of the interaction is perceived to decrease.

This places social media as a feasible setting for social exchange to take place. Interaction between peers includes the act of one child posting on social media and the reward of affirmation from their peers liking, commenting, or sharing the posts. In this regard, activity on posts can be seen as both a reward, but also a punishment. The punishment being the child not receiving activity on their post. There are many stories of children taking down posts when they do not generate enough activity on social media. The intended effect of posting thoughts via social media is to gain a positive response. When a negative response is given, it can cause disruption in an actor's perceptions of self and the activity (Blease, 2015).

Many people post on social media purely for themselves and the perceptions that others create, as there are millions of users online for interaction with which to occur (Hendricks, 2013). These interactions will continue as the actors continue to post online. By repeating the interactions and the activity of liking, commenting, and sharing, the actor is affirmed in their posts. This then increases their self-gratification (Blease, 2015). Once this occurs multiple times, there is less risk associated with engaging in the behavior and therefore, will provide increased positive emotions and responses as seen in *Figure 2* (Lawler, et al, 2015). However, when the response is not as intended such as the example above the youth find more risk in the activity and therefore, will expect a less positive response when they post.

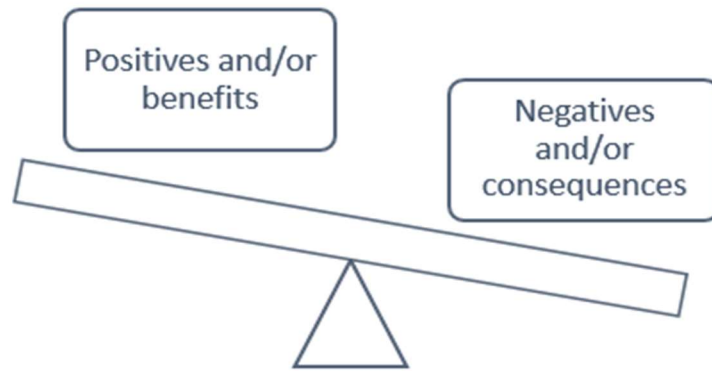


Figure 2 Social Exchange Theory (Lawler, et al, 2015)

With social media, youth elicit benefits and risks associated with their online behaviors. Risks of social media use include cyberbullying, depression (O'Keeffe, & Clarke-Pearson, 2011), and negative identity development (Benn, 2017). While there are several studies focused on the negative results of social media use, there are also benefits such as social relationships, positive emotional experiences (Wang et al, 2012), and identity exploration (Ward, 2017). These benefits and risks associated with social media and identity join social exchange theory and identity development.

The Combined Model: Youth Activist Identity Cycle on Social Media

The two theoretical frameworks explained in the previous section illustrate two different ways that youth could use social media to construct and maintain their identity online and in person. Identity Control Theory allows for insight on how individuals create and alter their identities through feedback from their environment. This includes other individuals with which they encounter and interact. (Burke, 2006). Within this, there is the concept of individuals now doing this virtually using SNS. Social Exchange Theory highlights the importance of risks and

rewards in an individual's thought processes. With this, an individual may pursue an action with greater confidence or decide to not repeat or do the action at all (Lawler, et al, 2015). This theory can be seen in individuals posting behaviors on social media and the activity they receive or do not receive on their posts. Combining these two social psychological theories into a new model, will allow for further understanding of how these two theories can be applied to youth and their use of social media for identity construction.

When youth use social media, for example Twitter, they already have a set of identities or perceptions of themselves they have created through their lifetime (Erikson, 1968). This would be considered the identity standard as seen in *Figure 3*. When looking at advocacy as an identity, youth may not have formally identified themselves as advocates; however, they may agree with a

NEW COMBINED MODEL: Youth Activist Identity Cycle on Social Media Figure

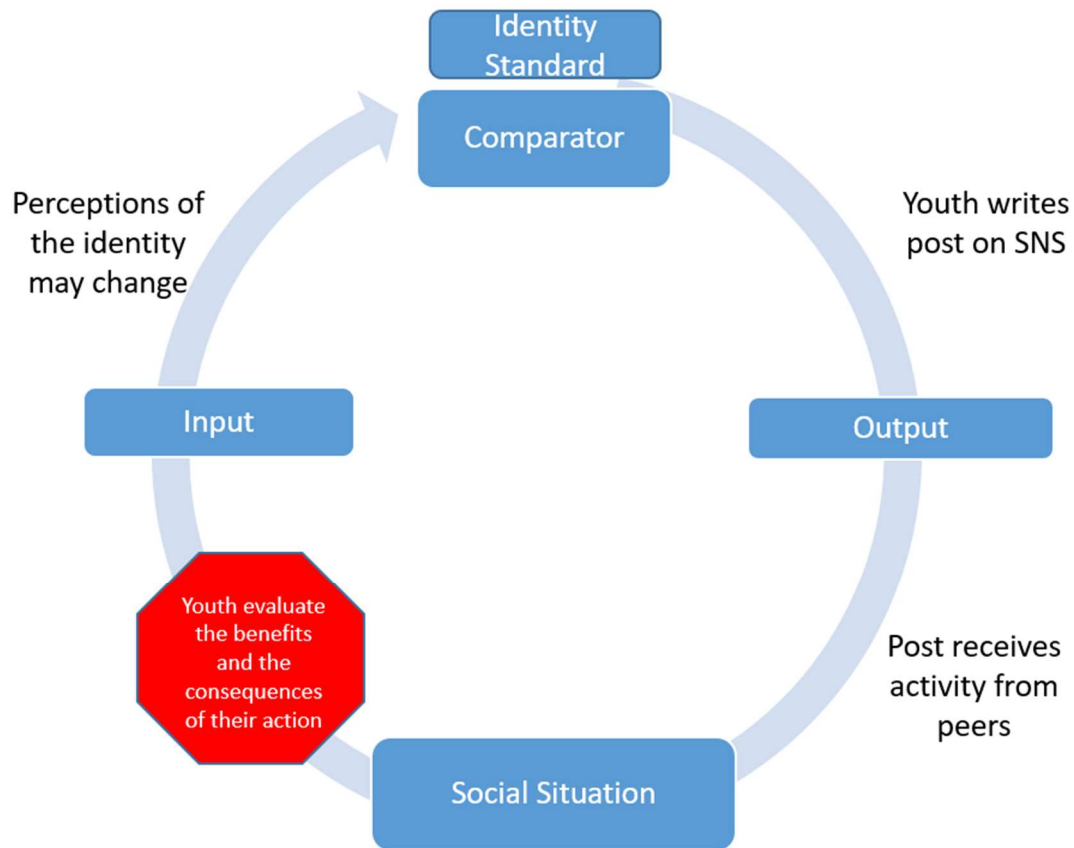


Figure 3 New Combined Model

group of advocates or have a stance on an issue.

One of the first steps is for the youth to develop a perception of their self. Within this, it can be viewing themselves as someone who cares about this issue and/or someone who has a large amount of social connection with their peers. The next step of the *identity control theory*

(ICT) loop would be for them to perform an action they believe represents this identity (Burke, 1991). In social networking sites these actions would be creating a post that reflects the identity they are pursuing. In this applied model, it would be the action of writing and posting a post on SNS. Once they post this post, they reflect on how this action was perceived by their peers, which is shared via activity on posts such as likes, comments, and shares. A disruption can occur once a youth posts on social media and another user challenges or attacks the identity found in the initial post (Burke, 1991). When the youth has obtained this response, they will then evaluate on whether or not this post was a success, meaning it received the anticipated response from their peers, or if it failed by not receiving the anticipated response. At this point in the model, youth are now seeing the benefits/rewards of the post or the consequences of this post and will use this information to guide their perceptions on the success of the identity perception or the failure (Lawler, et al, 2015).

The youth will reflect on this the previous response and they will do one of two things. The first is, if the post received the anticipated response, this will affirm the behavior and identity of the youth and they will then attempt to repeat the same behavior to further pursue this identity perception. The other option would be if the post did not receive the anticipated feedback, the youth will then attempt to adjust their next post OR they will adjust their perception of the identity (Burke, 1991). This is seen as the comparator to the original identity as seen at the top of the loop in *Figure 3*.

Theoretical Expectations

Using the *Youth Activist Identity Cycle on Social Media*, I expect to observe the following:

1. Youth will alter their posting behaviors due to the feedback they receive from their peers on these online posts. As previously discussed, peer relations and acceptance are

important in adolescents (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2014), and therefore can influence youths' online behaviors.

- a. Youth will use positive affirmations and increased activity on posts as a confirmation of the identity they desire to achieve. I expect posts that receive more positive feedback will be repeated in style and language,
 - b. While posts that receive negative or less feedback will be less likely to be repeated.
2. Over time, in order to narrow their identity, youths' posts will become more focused on items and issues that receive more positive feedback, and the youth will begin to present a common issue/topic for their activism.

This model can potentially explain how youth use social media to create their identities and how they may or may not use peer feedback to affirm their perceptions of these identities. While in this study, the youth being studied will be youth who are activists. It does not mean this model is solely related to youth activists. I hope this model will be used in explaining the larger concept of how youth use social media to develop their online and offline identities.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how youth activists construct their identity through their social media usage. This study employed a qualitative case study design due to the exploratory nature of the research questions and the progressiveness of social networking sites. The first section will discuss the study population. As a case study, this thesis will entail an embedded multiple case study design as a means to help generalize and find replication in the multiple cases of chosen youth advocates. The youth advocates chosen were found using purposeful sampling criteria in which the youths' Twitter pages, and the youth themselves have to meet.

The second section will describe the analytical methods employed in the study, which was a content analysis of the Twitter posts on the youth pages, as well as the comments and quantitative data from these posts such as likes and shares. By using pattern finds and cross case analysis, the multiple cases were compared for identity construction, reinforcement, and maintenance. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the study, there were several measures to ensure validity and reliability of the study such as, keeping a research journal, creating a case study database, and having other professional researchers review case study drafts. Additionally, the limitations of the study are the time constraints, the vastness of social networking sites, and the continuous nature of status updates on SNS.

Methodology

Qualitative research methodology aims to explore “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their

experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). In this study, the qualitative approach was used because of the interpretive nature of this style of research and the objectives of the research questions. Some characteristics of qualitative research are that it is conducted in natural setting, there is a focus on participants’ meanings, and oftentimes they use inductive analysis instead of deductive (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, qualitative research rooted in delivering a holistic account of what is being studied (Creswell, 2007).

Case studies are a method of qualitative research in that they are used when researchers are asking how or why an instance occurs (Yin, 2014). Case studies also occur in natural settings where researchers have limited control of behavioral events. This means that researchers will lack the necessary control often used in more quantitative methods (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2014). Additionally, case studies focus on contemporary events and phenomenon. This is due to the need for multiple sources such as observations, documents, and artifacts (Yin, 2014). To further define what a case study is Yin (2014) supplies this definition:

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon [the ‘case’] in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.” (p. 16)

Within the research method of case studies, there are different types of case studies and different methods how to conduct a case study and how many cases will be studied. This study was conducted as an embedded multiple case design. Meaning that there were multiple cases of youth activist cases studied, and for each case, there were multiple units of analysis within each case. The goal in having multiple cases to research is not dissimilar to doing an experiment multiple times to ensure the same or similar results (Yin, 2014). By reviewing the cases chosen for this study the expectation is they will having similar results also known as literal replication,

or they will have results that differ, but for reasonable reasons (Yin, 2014). This study aimed to find commonalities between multiple youth activists on Twitter, and will anticipate potential conflicts as a means of reliability.

The units of analysis used are content analysis of the Twitter posts from the individual cases studies, as well as quantitative data of the number of posts posted, comments, likes, and shares (retweets).

Participants and Procedures

The cases studied were youth who have developed into advocates and have a large social media presence. I followed a purposeful sampling procedure, which was designed to find the most relevant and accessible cases to study based on the screening process. Purposeful sampling is when a “researcher selects a participant according to the need of the study” (Morse, 1991, pg. 129). This style of sampling was used to find information rich participants that fit the needs of the study (Coyne, 1997). The initial screening process is to establish criteria for the individuals and their Twitter accounts to meet. The primary criteria chosen to select the sample were that participants must:

- be between the ages of 13-18 year of age,
- must be a female,
- have a notable event or crisis to have stimulated a response,
- have a topic or specific issue they support,
- be located in the United States,
- post primarily in the English language,
- have a Twitter account,
- have at least 1,000 followers,

- have at least 1,000 tweets posted, and
- have an active account (not an archival account).

This criterion was developed to ensure the youth have a large follower base, but they are also still participating in the activism being studied. The age range was chosen due to the development stage, and United States privacy law states youth should not have profiles on SNS until the age of thirteen.

In the preliminary stages of the search, a few youth were found that meet this criteria. Youth were found by Google searching phrases such as “youth activist”, “youth advocates”, “teenage youth advocate” and “teenage youth activist”. Four youth – Jazz Jennings, Emma Gonzales, Marley Diaz, and Jamie Margolin. These youth were selected for this case study because of their differing topics in activism and the amount of twitter feeds that included the appearance of authentic youth voice. In other words, each youth’s twitter posts were initiated by the youth and not a social media manager. This was very important in order to ensure youth voice reflected their identity, the purpose of the study. Two youth were eliminated due to the influence of mass media attention and production. For example, Jazz Jennings and Emma Gonzales were two other activists who fit the sample criteria. However, they were not studied due to a time large media following based on television celebrity status or mass news media attention. Though this study focused on female youth activists, an attempt was made to find political advocates across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, when searching the criteria listed above, there were not any activists found who advocated from a more conservative view point nor were any found matching the sampling frame. Finally, the present case study was limited to two cases due to a limitation of time for the study to be completed.

As a result, two youth met the criteria stated above and were included in this study. These youth are Marley Dias and Jamie Margolin.

Marley Dias

Dias is the founder of the movement #1000BlackGirlBooks, which is aimed to distribute 1,000 books with black girl protagonists (Stevens, 2017). She began her journey after her mother asked her what she wanted to change in the world and she noticed black girls were underrepresented in literature. She is fourteen years old, has 11,000 followers, and has 1,500 tweets. She has recently published her own book, and continues to advocate for diversity and inclusion.

Jamie Margolin

Margolin is a climate change activist who founded a youth led organization that advocates for changes in environmental policy (Rodriguez, V. 2018). While she does advocate on Twitter she (like Marley) has now lead and attended several in person forms of activism. She has sued the state of Washington and lobbied in Washington, DC for better policies on climate change. She is seventeen, has 5,315 followers, and has 8,792 tweets. She currently is still advocating for climate change policies to be created and addressed.

Both youth were chosen from a search from the listed criteria above. However, these two youth were not the only two activists found from this search.

Data Collection

In the current study, the data collection was mainly focused on previous twitter posts of youth activists on their public Twitter accounts. These posts were collected from what is considered their natural setting and focused on the context of what the youth who posted them were endeavoring to say or mean in these posts. The study was inductive in nature as the Twitter

posts were analyzed and coded in terms of what types of posts they are and what the purposes of the posts are. Once sorted, the categories were analyzed for potential themes or patterns.

Twitter

Twitter was chosen as the medium for this study for several reasons. The first reason to note is the relevance Twitter has presented in the past year as a space for youth empowerment and social justice. Twitter has been suggested as a news media, where discussion of current events may occur.

While Twitter is not the leading SNS application youth may use, such as Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook were found to be used more often, it was found in a recent study that 32% of youth reported they use Twitter (Anderson, & Jiang, 2018, para 1). Additionally, the nature of Twitter provides a large amount of content and data to conduct the study. Compared to Instagram and Snapchat, Twitter is based more on text rather than imagery, which for the purpose of this study is a better means in order to discuss how youth are constructing their social identities through the text posted. Facebook was not considered due to how most users' profiles are private, meaning they are not located in the public domain; therefore, youth may not use this form of social media for more global outreach and activism.

The type of coding that was used is values coding. Values coding is helpful in reflecting individuals' attitudes, identities, and their worldview (Saldaña, 2015). This style of coding is useful in social media research as users are masking posts which reflect the views and identities they wish others to receive when viewing their posts and profiles (Saldaña, 2015).

Finally, this study aimed to look at the large picture of how youth are using social media to construct, maintain, and develop their identity as a youth activist. The data collected was mainly from Twitter posts, collected as documentation and/or archival records. The study used

Twitter's advanced search program (ASP) (<https://twitter.com/search-advanced>) and Webscraper (<http://webscraper.io/>) to help find and collect data (Davis, Love, & Killen, 2018).

Using Twitter's ASP, I searched each of the individual accounts for tweets. I sampled these accounts by collecting tweets that used terms that may lead to the presentation of an identity or belief statement. By searching keywords and phrases using Twitter's Advanced Search page, I was able to access and collect tweets that reflect the presentation of an identity (Davis, Love, & Killen, 2018). Keywords and phrases searched are "I am," "I believe," "We are," and "We believe." After the initial search was completed, additional search terms were added due to data suggesting other phrases and terms were used by youth to identify themselves. These additional terms are: "I'm", "We're", "We aren't", "As an", "As a", "I'm fighting for", "I love", "I can", and "We can".

After collecting the tweets, they were organized in a workbook in Microsoft Excel. Tweets were organized by the year they were posted and who posted them. Within each tweet collected, the data I analyzed was the tweet content and the numerical information associated with it, such as number of likes, retweets, and comments. This process was done using Microsoft Excel. Once this was completed the text from the tweets was printed off and the coding process began.

In addition to the raw data collected from Twitter, other data sources were used to support potential findings. Some of these sources were textbooks and related peer reviewed journals. Additionally, a research journal was kept by the primary researcher to document the research process and any changes to the initial study design.

Analytic methods

Once the tweets were collected, they were coded in thematic categories using Vales coding methods. These thematic categories were initially based on the purpose of the tweet (expected purposes are to share opinion, to inform, and to persuade), the type of information shared (expected information types are links to websites, link to profiles of other users, or personal stories), and potentially the general tone of the post (expected tones are angry, motivational, and excited). Again, these were just potential themes as through the analyzing process. Some themes may present themselves while others do not. Organizing the themes of the posts allowed the researcher to answer how the youth activists came to recognize their activist community and how they were able to construct their identity as an activist.

The coding method in turn actually sorted the tweets by labeling part of the tweets as: attitudes, beliefs, values, actions taken, and identity statements. The codes identified were then sorted into further themes. These themes were then connected to the three research questions are posed by this study.

With the quantitative data collected on the Twitter posts, the researcher can view the activity on posts and evaluate the response of the users to the activity. The activity was coded as “positive” or “negative”. Once sorted, the following posts the user posts will be coded as either “affirming view from previous post” or “rejecting/ altering view from previous post”. This allowed the researcher to analyze the third research question of how the youth activist’s identity is maintained, revised and expanded.

Both of the processes above were done on an individual case to ensure the themes were representative on the nature of a youth activist. Two coders went through the initial case to ensure similar themes were created. The two coders’ codes were similar in the values, attitudes,

identity statements, and actions highlighted in the random sample of tweets. Once the initial case was completed, the code was applied to the rest of the cases. Once the cases were completely coded, the individual cases were viewed in a cross-case synthesis comparing the results of each study to find any commonalities between the case study results.

Trustworthiness and Limitations

In order to ensure this study is understood as quality research there are some aspects of the study that should be emphasized to prove the trustworthiness of the study. There are four logical tests that have been recommended to ensure the trustworthiness of a study, construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2014).

The first test is the construct validity test. This test is to ensure the study is using the correct procedures to study the constructs within the study (Yin, 2014). One way this study ensured this goal was met was by having multiple sources of evidence such as previous literature on youth identity construction, youth social media use, news articles from the time of the event or on the youth activist specifically, and the content that was analyzed on the youth activist Twitter page. Another method that ensured this test was to keep a research journal diary to establish a chain of evidence of what findings had been made and what changes have been made to ensure the construct was being studied completely. The third and final way the researcher ensured construct validity is by drafting case study reports and having them read by research professionals.

The next test of trustworthiness is internal validity, which is used only in exploratory or causal studies whereby establishing a cause and effect relationship a main goal of a study (Yin, 2014). In this study, methods to ensure internal validity were pattern matching of the content of the posts on youth activist pages, when they occurred, and addressing rival explanations in the

results of the study.

External validity is the third test of trustworthiness and it is defined as “defining the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized” (Yin, 2014, pg. 46).

The study generalized the use of the multiple case studies design allowed the findings to be several different areas of youth advocacy as the study endeavored to find replications within the multiple cases. Additionally, in future research the objective will be to apply what has been learned in this study to other social media platforms.

The final test of validity is reliability, which is being able to demonstrate the methods of the study can be repeated and be able to find the same or similar results (Yin, 2014). This study ensured this through creating a case study protocol, which is to document the method of the study at every step. This was initially done informally using the research journal/diary previously discussed, but is formally written up in the final presentation of the study. Additionally, those notes were added to a case study database where all the case study materials will be stored on the computer. The information found in this database will be the quantitative data retrieved from the Twitter posts, the posts collected themselves, and the research notes written.

While trustworthiness is a measure of how well the researcher designed the study for validity and reliability there are still some things the research cannot control within the study design. These aspects are called limitations of a study. Several of the limitations are due to the vastness of the internet and more specifically of SNS in general. There is a very limited way to be able to find all the youth advocates on social media sites. Additionally, in social media sited searching the terms “youth activist/advocate” produced organizations and adults who advocate on behalf of youth.

The study also is limited in the amount of time considered within the study. Due to the nature of SNS, there are new posts and new users becoming youth activists every day. This study will only take a screenshot of a small sample of youth who are activists on one specific SNS. Future research would be designed to view other SNS and other youth activists in order to potentially further expand on this limitation.

Another limitation is that it was difficult to find a conservative youth activist who supported a topic or issue. The cases that were found, generally supported the Republican political party, but did not advocate for a topic in depth. This leads to questions such as why are conservative youth activists more difficult to find? Why are there more liberal youth who are speaking out on specific issues than conservative youth?

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Who is Marley Dias?

Youth

Marley Dias is a young female social representation activist. While investigating her Twitter feed, several aspects of her identity were identified through her self-identification. Going further into the identity of Marley Dias, she discusses her role as a youth. She uses terms such as *youth*, *child* and *kid* to define herself. She is currently thirteen years-old. She began her activist journey on Twitter in 2016 when she was eleven.

Activist

The next identity Marley proclaims is as an activist. She identifies herself as caring about social representation in literature, specifically the representation of black girls in literature. One of Marley's achievements as an activist is founding the organization *1000BlackGirlBooks*. This organization focuses on finding 1000 books that highlight black girls as the protagonist of the story. She also is identified as a leader among her fellow youth in advocating for social representation and literature, for example this tweet:

"Thank you @Yahoo for this great feature. I am so honored to be among this group of young civic leaders who are choosing to rise up! Here is my story of fighting for equity and inclusion."- Marley Dias, November 8, 2018 (Dias, 2018).

She also identifies as a literacy spokesperson. During her time as an activist, she has become a published author of a book with a female black protagonist.

Race Identity

Through her activism of finding these books that highlight black female protagonists, the importance of Marley's identity as both a girl and person of color is highlighted. She focuses on being black and the lack of representation in the media. Her concern for the lack of black female protagonists highlights the need to see herself accurately depicted in the media. She also highlights the intersectionality of being a woman of color and how she navigates the combination of the two identities of being a woman and a person of color. This includes encountering the oppression both of these groups in their everyday lives. During the month of February, the month in which Black History Month is celebrated, Marley always posted about her pride in her race identity and the ways she celebrates, for example:

"This #BlackHistoryMonth, @Walmart is acknowledging young queens & kings, who are creating change that inspires. I'm honored to be a part of it! Also included in the campaign are Kheris Rogers and Moziah Bridges." -Marley Dias, February 5, 2019 (Dias, 2019).

Gender Identity

A final component of Marley's identity is her identity as a female. As previously discussed, she experiences the intersectionality of being a woman of color and she discusses how those two identities can interact. In her role as a female, she encounters gender expectations and discrimination. Additionally in this role, she identifies herself as a daughter and the impact that identity has on her life and her activism.

Research Question 2: Marley and Her Activist Community

The identities which Marley identifies continue to influence how she sees herself as an activist and how she comes to identify with her activist community around her.

Call to Action

The first way that she comes to identify with this is through her personal actions as an activist. One of these actions is how she calls people to action regarding her issue of social representation in literature. She does this through challenging them to call for change regarding this issue. She also reminds them and informs them about her organization, her partnerships with other organizations, and her mission regarding social representation in literature. She asks people to stand up and stop the injustice of the lack of women of color protagonist in literature and in the media. She also does this through raising awareness of the issue and wants to prevent other girls feeling the way she did when she first began this journey in activism. She wants to improve on this issue by finding “black girl books”, and improve the number of black girl books being found in bookstores and libraries.

“We can change the world,”-Marley Dias May 14, 2018.

She also encourages people to develop a higher level of consciousness to fight for her cause. Marley asks the people to rise and empower others through supporting her cause. This support is more about people power, and how a group of people supporting a cause and an issue can increase the amount of influence and change an organization can have. She also asks the people to be motivated to join her issue through connecting and by attending events that support her issue.

Finally again, a way she asks for support and calls the people to action is she asks for monetary support, as seen in this tweet:

“I am judging you (like @luvvie) if you have not yet bought a tix or donated to @grassrootsfound...” -Marley Dias, November 18, 2016 (Dias, 2016).

She asks them to donate to her organization and to her partnering organizations, such as her mother's organization The Grassroots Foundation. She continues to urge her audience to invest in these organization so they can influence change by finding #1000blackgirlbooks, or sending youth to camps.

Personal Actions

Her personal actions are highlighted in terms of what she does or will do to achieve her goals as an activist. Several of these actions occur under her leadership of #1000blackgirlbooks, but the action that initiated her recent actions was her founding of her organization #1000blackgirlbooks.

Founding #1000blackgirlbooks

The first actions she took was creating #1000blackgirlbooks, this is the foundation of her activism. This was a pivotal point in her seeing herself as an activist, and the development of the creation of her activist identity. This organization desires to collect books and titles where women of color are the protagonist of the story and create a list of these books in order to say that found them and to highlight the number of books with women of color as the protagonist. This also help raise awareness of the importance of these pieces of literature and the importance of young girls being able to see themselves in literature and in the role of the 'hero' of a story.

Additional Personal Actions

She also continues to secure funding for her organization and the organizations with which she partners her efforts as an activist. She continues to be interviewed. One of the more well-known interviews she has done was appearing on The Ellen show when she was younger.

She most recently published a book in January 2018, titled *Marley Dias Gets It Done* where she highlights her work of activism, her issues, and how she uses social media for

activism, thus creating yet another black girl book to be added to her list of #1000blackgirlbooks. She has done presentations as well regarding her book and the issue of social representation. These presentations may be done by herself or with the addition of others. She has done these presentations when attending meetings or traveling on tours. She also builds her network. She does this by contacting others and reaching out to others in order to raise awareness to her issue.

“Me and the @GrassRootsFound Super Girls are speaking on a @PhillyUrbanite panel I’m so excited! We must educate for freedom. #liberty@,”-Marley Dias July 26, 2016 (Dias, 2016)

All of these actions can gain the attention of others and can lead to rewards or recognition for the work she does. She uses the rewards to reinforce her identity as an activist. These rewards are an external reinforcement from others that can confirm her identity as an activist.

Reflection on Activist Role

The final way her activism identity helped her identify with her activist community is her reflecting on her role as an activist. She does this through highlighting her desire to “do her best” as an activist. She uses the phrases “I can’t wait” and “I love”, and the term “care” to highlight the things about which she is excited as an activist. She uses these words to reflect upon how, as an activist, these events, people, and actions are placed as a priority in her life.

“I love love love your review,” Marley Dias February 19, 2019 (Dias, 2019).

Activist Organizations

#1000BlackGirlBooks

The next way she comes to terms with her activist community is through activist organizations such as the one she founded. Since she is the founder of #1000blackgirlbooks, she derives the majority of her connection to her activist community from this organization. This

organization desires to raise awareness about the lack of social representation for women of color in literature. Marley and her organization find books with strong women of color protagonist and compiles a list of these books. This is so they can raise awareness of the lack of these titles and their importance.

Public Perception of Organization

It is clear Marley hopes her followers see the results of her organization's hard work and they see the organization as catchy, with their hashtag of #1000blackgirlbooks, has gained media attention.

“It's almost summer & I am starting a national reading tour. Read with me. More details coming on @GrassRootsFound site. #1000BlackGirlBooks,” -Marley Dias May 23, 2016 (Dias, 2016).

She has hosted events such as her tours where she speaks to different organizations about the importance of her issue and she knows that the public sees her projects. She understands people may see her work as a service to those women of color. She is fighting on their behalf. She believes they may see this as a contribution to society as she continues to represent women of color through her work on her official account on social media.

Actions of the Organization

While this is what she believes the public sees of her organization, there are still some areas she highlights as actions the organization actually performs. She sets goals for how she will spread awareness. She attends meetings and gatherings to continue to spread awareness. She builds movements, by planning these events and the goals she has set for herself as well as the organization of #1000blackgirlbooks. She focuses on these things and it is through her work and

her partnerships with other organizations and groups, such as The Grassroots Movement, that she has been able to complete the goals.

Benefits from Activist Organizations

The actions of her organization will lead to benefits for Marley, both professionally and personally. She feels she has a voice and has been able to develop fellowship with others in the activist community.

She continues to engage in her hobby and passion of reading, which is something she highlights throughout her posting behaviors. Not only does she get to speak about the issue of social representation in literature, she also is able to read the books she found and was recommended with strong women of color protagonist. She gets inner strength of fighting for these issues, the spark that can ignite her passion in fighting for these issues, and her love for reading.

Some of the professional benefits she receives from being an activist is the progress on improving awareness of this issue. She also is developing organizational skills as she develops the organization and her goals. Being an adolescent, she is continuing to build her skills, one of which is her organizational skills. She also is building a professional network as she connects with businesses, organizations, and other individuals. She has access to more resources as she grows this professional network. These resources may help her later on as she moves into life stages where she goes to college and/or the workplace. She has influence as she grows into her activist identity. This influence can aid her later on as well among not only her followers, but also the literature community and her peers.

Role Models

The next topic that has helped Marley connect to her community as an activist is through role models. One role model that has made a large impact on her growth, not only as a person but also as an activist, is her mother.

Who Are Her Role Models?

In order to discuss this, we need to discuss who her role models are, other women of color in her life, but specifically her mother. How she is connected with these women through their shared life experience and her belief in them. These relationships can be developed through friendship as well as a familial relationship as seen in this tweet:

“Today I am doing my duty as a good daughter and citizen of the world. I am asking you to support my mommy and her efforts to provide healthy meals for families in Newark, Harlem and...”-Marley Dias November 6, 2018 (Dias, 2018).

These women of color can be labeled as activists and/or celebrities she has encountered throughout her journey as a youth activist. She describes these women as authentic, superior, awesome, and nice. These are very positive terms she uses to describe these women and reflect that these characteristics define who these women are to her.

Actions Performed by Role Models

These descriptions can be assigned based on what these women do for Marley. They offer advice and can give her recognition for her work as a youth activist. As previously discussed, Marley has received awards and recognition for her work in activism and some of

these awards have come from role models she continues to look up to throughout her activist career.

Actions Marley Performs Towards Her Role Models

Marley also performs actions herself towards the role models. She acknowledges them and holds expectations for them in what a role model is and what an activist is to her. She expects the role models to continue to meet those expectations she has previously set. She also appreciates them and joins them in a partnership as she works with their organizations. She admires them for what they do and what they stand for as her role models, celebrities, and activists. She will often quote them and highlight their previous posts, posts it on her own Twitter feed, and connect it to her own experiences. This is a way she can give them recognition for what they mean to her and her journey has she has developed into an activist.

Technology

Technology has been present throughout the entirety of the discussion so far, but it is a topic that played a role in developing Marley into the activist she is today. While some use these technologies solely for entertainment purposes, Marley has used it to accomplish activism.

Internet

Internet is the specific technology Marley has used to accomplish successes. This is mostly focused on the actions Marley performed using this technology as she fought for social representation in literature. She tags others users in her tweets and reposts not only her own posts but also others to raise awareness about her chosen issue. She sees her followers and other fellow activists post on their social networking sites and she continues to invite others to come to her

events and discuss her issue and organization via social media. She uses SNS to connect with friends, followers, activists, and role models in order to support herself and her organization.

Activism Topic

One of the most important concepts to discuss Marley's activism is her passion.

Justice

Her focus is justice and it is related to her race identity and seeing her race identity accurately depicted in media as well as literature. She fights for equality as she explains in one of her posts, that it is not fair to not be able to see yourself in the media and literature and she wants inclusion for black women and representation of black women. She fights against racism in the regard there are less female women of color protagonists in literature. One example is a tweet posted on January 18, 2018:

"@chinamcclain @NafessaWilliams I love your performance in @blacklightning It is so awesome to see young black women playing superheroes!"-Marley Dias January 18, 2018 (Dias, 2018).

While justice and specifically social justice is her core issue, it can include other issues as well. Justice is often found in the details and the passion she holds for these other issues.

Education/Literacy

The first is education. She focuses on reading and her love for reading. This flows into the encouragement of literacy and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education for the purpose of education.

Women Empowerment

Her issues connect to women empowerment. She focuses on being black and what that means for her rights and life experience. She highlights being a woman and specifically a woman

of color in her activism. In her organization #1000blackgirlbooks, she is not only looking for black protagonists, but black female protagonists. She sees herself less in the media and literature as a black protagonist, but even less as a black female protagonist. She also understands that as an activist she is endeavoring to uplift other women as seen in this tweet:

“Thank you so much for coming to support me. I really appreciate the kind words of encouragement, and I’m glad that you are sharing my messages globally to other girls,”- Marley Dias April 25, 2018 (Dias, 2018).

Emotions Related to Activism

The final way that Marley comes to identify with her activist community is through her feelings and emotions on her social media pages. Marley is mostly a very positive presence on social media. She discusses how grateful she is for her awards and recognitions. She labels herself as being “honored” when she receives recognition from others. She claims she excited quite often about her travels, her organization, and to meet people. She uses the word “love”, “honor”, and “grateful” quite often to describe how she feels about many of the things she discusses. She has a lot of pride and happiness in what she does through her work in activism. She also has hope that one day the issue she fights against will become less prevalent. She has a lot of respect for her role models and gains a lot of inspiration from those individuals and other activists.

She also discusses her negative emotions, in particular, how she is upset. She discusses how she is scared, overwhelmed, and sometimes nervous. At one point, she was sick, so she opened up about how she was feeling about her physical health and the tiredness that accompanied it. That is seen in this tweet:

“Thank you @cleanandclear for sending me some more Night Relaxing Jelly Eye Sheet Mask Need it now especially because I’m sick (note: My family is from Mass),” - Marley Dias
June 4, 2018 (Dias, 2018).

Again, Marley is a mostly positive presence on social media and it could be due to her relationship with her mother and how her mother has a large role in her activism work. It could also be that she is just a generally happy person and that her platform is more positive about raising people up when finding social representation in literacy.

Research Question 3: Marley Maintaining, Revising, and Editing Her Identity

The question remains regarding Marley’s identity of how she maintains, revises and expands upon her multiple identities that were discussed in the previous two sections. These actions can be seen through four tweets that are examples of disruptions that occurred through Marley’s Twitter feed.

Activist Identity

The first identity presented in these tweets is Marley’s identity of an activist. Of the four tweets gathered, three highlight aspects of her activist identity. The first tweet that highlights this is seen in *Figure 4*.



Figure 4 Marley Dias July 26, 2016 (Dias, 2016)

This tweet is the first time she references collaborating with her mother’s activist organization and an example of how she discusses her personal actions in her pursuit of activism (Dias, 2016). This is mostly a positive disruption to her identity as it is the first time she is seen to collaborate with her mother on an activism action throughout the collected sample of tweets. This post received less activity than the other three tweets but it was also the first tweet she posted in the collection of the tweets; and therefore, may not have gained as many followers. This post received six retweets and three likes.

Her second tweet that highlighted her activism work is seen in *Figure 5*, where she makes a statement in regard to the 2016 presidential election.



Figure 5 Marley Dias November 6, 2016 (Dias, 2016)

This was a time she was speaking out as an activist and developing a political activism identity. She claims girls are “saddened everywhere”, not only because of the lost opportunity to have the first female President of the United States, but also due to the controversial discussion and statements that current President Donald Trump made that were highlighted in the 2016 election (Dias, 2016). Additionally, there were users who were attacking women in general about this event. This post received positive feedback in the form of five retweets, 21 likes, and one positive comment made by an adult woman.

The third tweet that is posted reflecting her activist identity is seen in *Figure 6* posted on May 4, 2018.



Figure 6 Marley Dias May 4, 2018 (Dias, 2018)

This disruption occurred as she made a mistake during an event and this action could not align with her perception of a successful identity (Dias, 2018). In this tweet, the disruption can be seen as both a positive and a negative as she is being vulnerable about a mistake she made at an award ceremony. She also still receives positive feedback on the post, which could lead to the negative disruption perception to be changed to a positive. The response on this post was one retweet and 17 likes.

Not all of the responses on these tweets are perceived as negative as there is no comments that counters the identity she shares within these posts. There are positive reinforcements through the likes the post received and the one comment encouraging her to continue to pursue her work in activism.

Gender Identity

The next identity that Marley presents in the sample of the four tweets collected is her identity as a female. The tweets that highlight this are seen again in *Figure 4*, *Figure 5*, and a new tweet to discuss seen in *Figure 7*.



**Figure 7 Marley Dias May 19, 2018
(Dias, 2018)**

This tweet refers to an interview Marley did with an important member of the organization Black Lives Matter (Dias, 2018). In the tweet however, she highlights a previous disruption of her identity and discusses how it made her feel, in relation to her identity as a woman of color.

Marley tells the story of how a boy made her challenge her identity as a black woman after being asked when was the first time she had someone attack her identity or try to make her

feel less confident. She opens up about a time, when she was in middle school. Apparently, the movie *The Karate Kid* had just premiered starring Jaden Smith, a young black boy movie star who, in the movie, has cornrows. As Marley was walking down the hall, a boy shouted out to Marley, “Hey Jaden Smith!” in a mocking manner. At the time, Marley was sporting her hair in cornrows and turned around to face the boy. “Marley, my name is Marley Dias, not Jaden, nice to meet you,” and walked off. Later she had a discussion with her mother about how she liked her hair in cornrows, no matter what the boy had said (Sugarman & Mettler, n.d.). In the tweet she then argued this story was the boy’s attempt to masculinize her for her hair being worn in cornrows (Dias, 2018). By posting, this she discussed the issue of being a woman of color, how she continues to have to face these challenges to masculinize her and to be seen in a stereotypical way such as needing to be seen as more mature. These continued instances can lead to women of color continuing to be marginalized as both women and people of color.

In this story, Marley not only reaffirmed her identity in the moment of the disruption but she also was able to build upon it and create a positive affirmation by speaking out against these occurrences in an interview. She was then able to receive feedback from this new positive disruption via the social media post. This post received three retweets and 26 likes.

Race Identity

The next identity that Marley presents throughout these four tweets is her race identity. She does this through the tweets in *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*. The tweet in *Figure 6* highlights two black females she looks up to as role models by quoting one of them, and accidentally mislabeling who said it by highlighting another black female activist (Dias, 2018). She connects with these women through their shared similarities-- not only race and gender but also their history in activism.

In the tweet in *Figure 7*, she presents the pride she has being a black girl and having yet an additional strong black female activist role model such as Patrisse Cullor, creator of the Black Lives Matter movement. In this occasion, she was able to open up with Cullor and discuss the things they have in common, for example, their pride in their race culture, their authorship, and the challenges they face being women of color (Dias, 2018).

Reflection on feedback

Overall, looking through the sample of these four tweets, as they present both positive and negative disruption in Marley's life, the response to these tweets is positive. While some of these tweets may have received more attention than others, there was not an example of an outwardly negative comment or an attack on Marley's representation of her identity. Some of these tweets did receive more attention or activity than others did, for example in *Figure 7* where she discusses the intersectionality of the struggles she faces being both a female and a person of color. An example of a tweet that received more activity was found in *Figure 5*, where she presents her role as an activist and as a woman by speaking for girls everywhere on the result of the 2016 election. Both of these posts received more positive reinforcements; therefore, the reflection on this is the identities being presented would be reinforced by the amount of positive attention received.

The other two posts that did not receive as much activity, still received positive reactions. This could mean that Marley's identity was still affirmed. For example, with the tweet of her apologizing for a mistake she made during the awards ceremony, she still received 17 likes on this post. The first tweet, while received less activity, was still early in her social media history. During this time, she may have decided to change the way she discusses her role in her activism and the actions she performs as an activist.

Similar in some ways, but different in other is Jamie Margolin. Jamie in summary is also a youth female activist. While she shares many of the same characteristics as Marley, her story and her passion are very different. As previous discussed, Jamie, in brief, is a climate change activist, who also branches out into other contemporary issues such as LBGTQ rights, and gun control.

Research Question 1: Who is Jamie Margolin?

Youth

The first part of her self-identification is her age. She focuses on being a youth and how she is growing in her physical self but also in her growth through adolescence and her growth as an activist. She specifically focuses on her generational label as Generation Z, also called Gen Z. She does this to distinguish herself from an older generation, the Millennial Generation, and the younger generation, Generation Alpha. Generation Z is different from the Millennial generation because the Gen Z population has had access to a lot of the technology from a young age, whereas the Millennial generation still remembers a time where these technologies were not present in everyday life.

“I am the only Gen Z speaker, and the youngest speaker at the Global Climate Action Summit. I am here with my @ThisIsZeroHour team, @Elsamengistu & @ariellemcohen , and we are the youngest voices at the summit. Thank you @PacificStand . #StepUp2018,”- Jamie Margolin September 14, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

She also identifies as a teenager or a “teen”, which is a very important label to her, mostly due to the transition this is into adulthood. This title is still associated with being a “Minor” or someone under the age of eighteen. This is a title she does not care for, as she cannot vote due to being a minor, and there is a sense of anger and unrest at her inabilities to vote.

“So proud of my friends @ZanageeArtis & @wildirisfen ! I’m also jealous y’all can vote this year, I hate being a minor ugh. #ThisIsZeroHour #Midterms #GOTV,”- Jamie Margolin September 26, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

She argues against the belief that people see youth as naive due to their age and lack of life experience. She uses the label “kid” often to describe herself. This may be due to the fact she feels that, as a kid, she should not feel obligated to advocate for the issues that she does, but unfortunately, due to the severity of the issues for which she advocates she feels a sense of obligation to do so.

Titles

Jamie also identifies herself through titles. She uses labels such as a spokesperson, a fan, but she also uses titles such as ally whether that’s to the LBGTQ community or being an ally to her fellow activists. She uses the term to explain that she spends her time supporting others and their causes. She also identifies herself as a survivor of climate change. She has survived poor air quality in her home state of Washington and she is trying to survive the epidemic she identifies as climate change. She is a leader and an activist for climate change. This is her main platform issue she discusses on her Twitter feed, mostly through the aspect that she is a founder of the organization Zero Hour, which is a women of color led climate change organization.

“This is amazing! I am the founder of a youth organization @ThisIsZeroHour and we would love to connect with you!”- Jamie Margolin March 16, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

She founded this with several other youth activists and they have continued to fight for climate change and policies that may influence climate change.

Race and Ethnicity

The identity for Jamie on race and ethnicity is very different than it is for Marley. Where Marley is a black female, Jamie is a Latina. Jamie often mixes the race identity and ethnic identity when describing herself. She describes herself being a Latina, but she also describes herself as being white passing.

“i gotchu girl. As a white-passing Latina i am always here to be supportive and uplift my darker POC sisters. lmk how I can help.”- Jamie Margolin February 3, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

Where in Latina is discussing her ethnicity, white passing is describing her race identity, and so it is very interesting to see her often mix these two when having these discussions of her being Latina but being a white in passing Latina.

“Hi green Latinos! I am the Latina (colombiana) founder of @ThisIsZeroHour putting on the youth climate march. I am interested in partnering!”- Jamie Margolin May 16, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

She also identifies herself as a woman of color and highlights this in her emphasis of her organization Zero Hour. She identifies Zero Hour as a woman of color led climate change activism organization.

Gender

Again, as discussed within Marley’s case there is the intersectionality of being a woman of color. Additionally, what that means in terms of how Jamie navigates life being both a woman and a person of color. She faces discrimination and oppression on both of these fronts and emphasizes the importance of being a woman and empowering other women. She also labels herself as a former horse girl, which relates back to the stereotypes that exist of women who have a passion for with working with horses.

“We American girls have been holding down the ship for a long time. We are a women of color led coalition that organized the @ThisIsZeroHour movement and the first ever international #YouthClimateMarch in 25 cities around the world this past summer. Why? Because #ThisIsZeroHour!”- Jamie Margolin February 12, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

Religious Identity

The next identity to focus on with Jamie is religion. This topic was not covered with Marley, as Marley did not discuss her religious identity as Jamie’s does. She identifies herself as Jew, and she uses labels such as “certified”, “card- carrying”, and “David Star wearing” to label herself as an authentic Jewish person, or member of the Jewish community. She does have some disagreement or shift in her identity, as she does not agree with the policy the Israeli government is espousing and putting forth, and from this, she makes the statement that disagreeing with the Israeli government does not automatically make someone anti-Semitic.

“As a certified card-carrying bat mitzvah’d Jew who wears my Star of David necklace every day, I need you to understand: CRITICIZING THE POLICIES OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MAKE YOU ANTI SEMITIC! I dont like what is doing to rn. Still Jewish tho.”- Jamie Margolin March 10, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

Sexuality

The last identity that Jamie self describes herself to be lies in her sexuality. This again is an aspect that was not discussed with Marley. This may be due to age or the fact Marley is straight or has not come into considering sexuality as an important part of her identity just yet. Jamie identifies as a lesbian and she advocates for LBGTQ rights. She discusses Pride and what Pride means in the LBGTQ community, dating, the importance of Disney giving Disney’s Princess, Elsa, a girlfriend, and the importance of lesbian women and girls.

“@alittlejeele hello I am a young queer girl and i know there’s been a lot of talk about giving Elsa a GF. As a queer girl I can tell you it would SAVE LIVES . You have power to make change and id like to talk to you as a Disney fan about this more. Please,” - Jamie Margolin
August 30, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

She argues against the cis-normative nature of society, meaning the way that society has structured itself for heterosexuality and bi-gender to the norm of society. She realizes she herself passes as a cis-normative, as outwardly she blends into society and does not stand out as a member of the LBGTQ community at first glance. She also argues that the media classifies LBGTQ members as second-class citizens and often “queerbait” them when creating and marketing media content.

“LGBT people are sick and tired of being queerbaited & used. Of people treating us like we’re second class citizens who don’t even deserve a Disney princess we can relate to. It hurts us for you to keep making us invisible on the big screen. Please #GiveElsaAGirlfriend.” -Jamie Margolin December 30, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Characteristics

Finally, some of the characteristics that Jamie uses to describe herself are silly, chameleon, weird, and sarcastic. She also claims she is new. She is new to the activist community and new to many of the growing opportunities she has experienced through her time as an activist. These again are just some of the characteristics she used to describe herself as in a narrative on her Twitter feed.

Research Question 2: Jamie and Her Activist Community

Just as Marley had several different ways she came to terms with her activist community,

Jamie identified several areas of her experience that helped her come to terms with her activist community.

Activist Identity

Call to action

The first is her activist identity within her call to action for the public, her personal actions as an activist, and her reflection of herself. Some of the ways Jamie calls the public to action are by asking them to resist, pressuring other lawmakers or corporation to change policy, to challenge the current way things are organized with environmental policies and the way society views issues such as gun rights and LGBTQ rights. She also asks them to expose and disrupt the norms she sees as well, and wants the public to make changes to those issues.

“Please #GiveElsaAGirlfriend — I can’t even begin to describe the pain that not seeing yourself in media causes. You would be saving lives, shifting the culture and making history. Please don’t let \$ & pressure from homophobia stop you! Queer kids have waited long enough. #GayElsa,” -Jamie Margolin December 30, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

She asks them to remind politicians of things, by contacting their senators. She asks the public to stand with her and to help her stop some of the injustices she continues to see occur in the world.

She calls the public to action by asking them to help her in raising awareness of the issues. She asks them to save the earth and the environment. She wants the people to deter the use of fossil fuels and other elements that could harm the environment. She asks them to help her in preventing climate change from worsening and to prevent laws being placed into effect that could potentially increase the harm of climate change. She wants to get rid of the toxic chemicals

that are harming the environment. She wants the public to reject the social norms she sees as harmful to herself and others, and improve the issues surrounding climate change and protect the environment.

The next way Jamie calls the public to action is she challenges them to develop a higher level of consciousness and to think critically. She understands people often take the media at face value and wants people to be able think more critically and be able to think for themselves. She uses words like “wake up” and at one event asks people to think critically. She asks them to rise and to be empowered in order to combat the issues she sees.

“Thanks! I will take that advice. I just wonder how we can promote critical thinking all over the country....” - Jamie Margolin December 26, 2016 (Margolin, 2016).

The final two things Jamie asks the public to do is to support. There are two different types of support she asks for throughout her Twitter feed. The first is people power, she asks the people to support her by motivating them to attend her events and presentations. The second type of support is monetary support and she asks the people to donate to her organization. She asks people to invest in her organization and asks them to give money to her cause. Without these funds she and her fellow activists would not be able to do the things they do in planning the events, marches, and conferences they attend and plan.

“Are you with @ThisIsZeroHour ? We are a bunch of broke high school students fighting for our lives and futures -- the #YouthClimateMarch was just the beginning and we the youth need your help to keep up the fight. Show us some love by DONATING HERE:

<http://thisiszerohour.org/donate,>” - Jamie Margolin August 23, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

Personal Actions

The next component of Jamie's activist identity is the physical actions she herself has done in her career as an activist. Jamie has a different take on how to approach her issues than Marley, especially with how she got her start in activism.

Suing The State of Washington

She started her activism journey by suing The State of Washington for their environmental policies and how the environmental policies in place were not protecting the people of Washington. She sued the State of Washington; and therefore, had to testify during the process of the suit.

Founding This is Zero Hour

She then created the organization This is Zero Hour, which highlights that the time to act against climate change is now. Through this organization, she has done presentations. She organized and hosted marches in Washington D.C. where she chanted on the steps of The Capitol. Through this organization, she has facilitated meetings and conferences. She has reached out and built her network. She applied to several different awards, published reports and posts on the issue of climate change, and what her organization has done. She also has secured funding for this organization by asking for donations. This has all lead to her receiving awards, much as Marley has received awards for her work in activism. She is greatly appreciative when she receives these awards in her Twitter posts and always discusses the pride and the appreciation she has for the people who nominated her for these awards.

Reflections of Self

The final way that Jamie came to terms with her community through her activism identity is through her reflections of herself. She uses some of the same language Marley uses to discuss

this topic. She states often that she cannot wait for events and meeting people. She states that she is doing her best and that she really cares about these issues. However, Jamie identifies things that Marley did not discuss. Jamie labels herself as a procrastinator and she labels herself as obsessive over her issues and her role as an activist. While she does care endlessly about these issues, she does recognize her flaws as an activist as she can procrastinate on some of the tasks she needs to complete as an activist and as the founder of This is Zero Hour. She recognizes she can become obsessive of the issue of climate change and her organization, but this is typically just a reflection of her passion and drive to assist in aiding the resolution of climate change.

Activist Organizations

Public Perception of Organization

Jamie has also come to terms with her activist community through activist organizations. There are three ways these organizations help her do this. The first is through what the public sees these organizations doing and what they think of these organizations. The public sees from Jamie's This is Zero Hour organization is that the name is catchy and many see the logo on the merchandise they have created in making it an official organization. Some people may confuse her organization with a corporation or they may see this for the problem they are trying to combat. Others may see this organization as a problem with their marches and desire to change current environmental policies, their suing The State of Washington, and their marches on the nation's capital.

"I am a 17yroid activist, citizen of WA State & founder of the @ThisIsZeroHour movement. I sued @JayInslee Inslee along with @youthvgov . He is all talk no action and I would love to be on your show to talk more about why. My Op-Ed in the @guardian," - Jamie Margolin January 2, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

These actions may be seen as obnoxious and radical in the way they are fighting against climate change. Others may see their work as a service to others in their fight against climate change and that they are contributing to society by fighting against the current policies and industries that are harming the environment. Their movement could be labeled as a rebellion, a business, or events the organization is hosting. The public may see this is a large organization or that they have a large reach in the population of people with whom they can make contact. Ultimately, the hope is the public will see the results of this organization as they fight against climate change.

Actions Performed by Organizations

While these things are what the public may see of this organization, some of the words Jamie uses explain what actions she actually does when she is involved in these organizations. They focus on climate change and they hope to achieve changes in the way some of the environmental policies are written. She hopes to establish new policies and experience different ways to enforce those policies. They do this through discussing this issue and fighting for this issue. They plan events and movements by planning panels, marches, and meetings. They set goals and write to-do lists. Jamie is a big fan of to-do lists and setting goals for herself that will aid in her completing tasks to assist her organization and movement. She discusses the “behind the scenes” work she does and this is an important word for her as she understands the public might not see all the work she and her fellow activists put in to make this organization work and become successful.

“Here’s to all my fellow overworked and unpaid student activists! So much pressure rests on our shoulders, we sacrifice so much. The world only notices us at our peak, but most of the time we’re not triumphantly leading marches. We’re struggling and laboring behind the scenes.”

-Jamie Margolin January 8, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

Benefits from Activism Organizations

As Jamie continues to work hard to accomplish her goals, for not only herself but her organization as well, she may receive some benefits from her work in activism. While these benefits may not be the initial reasons she began as an activist she has developed some of these personal and professional benefits throughout her journey as an activist. She may see progress in her issue. She may gain influence among activist community members and organizations. She may receive more resources she would not have had otherwise. These resources could help her later in life as she potentially goes to college, or to find a job. She may also encounter different opportunities to which she would not have had access without her time spent on activism. She receives a group and community in this professional setting as she connects and networks with other activists, organizations, and policy makers. In the future, these experiences may help her in finding a job. Jamie actually began her career in politics by working for Hillary Clinton’s campaign when she was fourteen.

“Thanks for your support @HillaryClinton! When I was 14 I interned for your campaign & even though my politics have changed since then, that will always be how I got my start in politics and I am greatfull for that experience .Do you support a #GreenNewDeal Madame Secretary?”- Jamie Margolin February 12, 2019 (Margolin, 2019).

She did also have another job offer come up due to her work in activism that she turned down due to it not agreeing with her morals and the purpose of This is Zero Hour. She gains a

sense of obligation and purpose in a business setting and she works on her organizational skills. Some personal benefits Jamie may receive are inner strength to fight for her issue, as she feels she has a voice that is being heard. She gets to engage in her passion by fighting for climate change. She gains a fellowship between her fellow activists and other youth as they navigate these experiences and the issues surrounding climate change. She gains a sense of bettering herself by working on skills and characteristics she would like to see more of in herself.

Role Models

Who Are Jamie's Role Models?

While these activist organizations have a larger role in supporting Jamie finding her activism communities, role models are seen as just as important in helping her come to terms with her activist identity. Jamie's role models are different from Marley's, not only because of the difference in their issues, but also due to how different people have different role models. Some of the role models Jamie has are in politics such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Hillary Clinton. Other role models are fellow activists such as Little Miss Flint and her sister activist in This is Zero Hour. She identifies several celebrities she looks up to on her Twitter feed.

“Alexandria -- as a young Latina women aspiring to run for office but overwhelmed by the corrupt system your win means so much to me I can't even begin to describe it. I can't stop watching your campaign videos. You are my hero,” -Jamie Margolin July 1, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Descriptions of Role Models

Some words she uses to describe these individuals are cool, attractive, have a good image, and are authentic. They are superior, awesome, nice and bold. These women are successful and they have achieved their goals in their endeavors whether it is politics, media, or activism. The important aspect of role models is the connection a person has to them. While some role models may be related to people through a familial connection, Jamie's role models are connected to her through her belief in them and her connection to them. This may be through her interest in politics, activism, her interest in media culture she enjoys, or her sexual orientation. Friendship seems to be the relationship she focuses on when discussing her role models in their activism community.

Actions Performed by Role Models

The description of these role models explains how Jamie may see them, but an important discussion is what these role models may do to continue to be important to Jamie. Some of them offer her advice if she meets with them or interact with her social media. They continue to inspire her and give her affirmation. Sometimes these affirmations can be in the form of awards or recognition in her work as an activist.

"@GLAZUSS I just want to say I am a HUGE fan and your music has inspired me so much and given me courage to come out. Thank you for being such an unapologetic queer role model for young queer girls like me. As a 16-yr-old queer girl your music means everyt,"-Jamie Margolin November 18, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Jamie's Actions Toward Role Models

These role models are not the only one that perform actions in this relationship between them and Jamie. Jamie performs actions when interacting with these role models. She watches

them, admires them, and internalizes the things they say or do. She values their opinion and gives them recognition for the work they do and her appreciation for them. Jamie may occasionally quote them if they say something with which she really connects. She may post their quote on her Twitter feed. She may flatter them, by calling them “Queen” which is a current trend of affirmation for an individual. She compares them to people such as herself and other strong women. If she sees them in person, she may hug them. She also joins them in their movements and holds expectations for them.

Technology

Due to Jamie’s age, as well as her method of activism, social media technology continues to be a large concept that influences Jamie on a daily basis. One area of this is through the entertainment and media industries.

Media

She talks about songs and artists that play a large role in her life whether it is through the LBGTQ community or just the impact these artists have on her life in general. She argues about the television industry, specifically Disney and the film *Frozen*. She presents arguments on the controversy of whether or not Disney should give Elsa a Disney princess/queen a girlfriend. This would make Elsa the first Disney princess to be a member of the LBGTQ community. She also brings up the cancellation of a show in which she felt she saw parts of her self-represented that she has not seen in media before. She comments a lot about news media such as CNN and Fox News, and comments on “Fake News” which is a term the current President of The United States has developed to discuss news media that are not presenting what he believes is accurate. All of the media has some way affected her interaction with her activist community and the issues in which she fights.

Internet

The internet is the other media she interacts with on a daily basis in order to discuss her activism. This is done through social networking sites such as Twitter, where the data for this study was collected. While on social media, she connects with people. She may shift her thoughts on people or issues. She also found people with which to connect and may tag these people in her posts when she is communicating with them. She invites people to follow her page, her feed, or the page of her organization This is Zero Hour. At one point a user brought up the argument that she is paid for her work as an activist on social media, however she is not paid for her work. She also has to approve things before they are posted both on her feed and This is Zero Hour's feed. She may measure her approval among her followers with the amount of activity a post receives. She uses social media by capitalizing on the different features offered on these sites, such as reposting other user's posts onto her own feed.

Social Media

Some of the things she talks about around social media is the use of her phone to post on social media and she discusses the story of the narrative of her life on these applications. She makes the distinction between her "real life" and the life she lives online, which is interesting that she would separate the two and it suggests there is a not "real life" component of her social media portrayal.

"While I'm grateful that @seventeen magazine did a feature on me, the article is written in the first person as if I'm talking even though none of those words are mine, and paints me in such a pretentious light me in the article sounds like someone I would dropkick in real life,"- Jamie Margolin July 12, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

She talks about her followers quite often, which refers to the people who chose to see what she posts on their own Twitter feed. In addition to the things she discusses on social media, she also discusses her feelings in regard to social media. She identified harassment when people attacked her and her views on social media. She also identified peer pressure. One specific occurrence of peer pressure was when she stated she would post her to-do list online so she would feel obligated to complete it since her peers could see it. She discusses feeling withdrawal when not using social media and technology in general.

“Posting tomorrow’s bare bones to do list so I am peer pressured by the internet to finish it + get through all 700+ emails I need to reply to. Sorry y’all if I’ve been slow in getting back to your requests or messages, still figuring out my post - #YouthClimateMarch work flow.” - Jamie Margolin August 16, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Government

The next way Jamie has come to terms with her activist community is through the topic of government. The issue of climate change is a highly controversial topic among politicians; and therefore, Jamie is invested in the ways that these policies effect the environment. Jamie argues against the bipartisan issue and argues that climate change should not be something the two political parties argue about because it effects everyone from the citizens who are affected by the law to the delegates who vote on them. The two parties she argues against are the Democratic Party, which is the party that is considered more liberal, and the Republican Party, which is typically, considered more conservative. The current president is a member of the conservative party and so she discusses her dissatisfaction with some of his more provocative statements in regard to women. She discusses her marches and rallies on the Capitol’s steps to advocate for policies that aid in the fight against climate change. She highlights the positives she

sees in the government such as the ability to pass laws to assist in the issue of climate change and how the citizens have the right to vote. She discusses the midterm election of 2018 frequently encouraging people to get to the polls to vote. She discusses the freedoms she has as a citizens such as the right to vote and the freedom of speech. The right to vote is very important to Jamie, mostly because she cannot do so yet herself, being a minor. She urges those who are above the age of eighteen to take part in voting so she can still see the changes she wishes to see. She highlights winning in some of her governmental discussions, specifically regarding elections. She encourages politicians to sign, pass, and support different laws such as the New Green Deal. While Jamie does have some positive views of the government, she still sees some negative aspects in the current political system. She speaks out against corruption and how the government encourages consumerism that she feels is bad for the environment. She often feels let down, betrayed, and ignored by the government. She feels that sometimes politicians lie, for example the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh into the Supreme Court in 2018 caused Jamie to be very upset with the political system. She often explains the government can villainize others and they continue to persecute different groups of people.

“.... the government is violating its duty and our Constitutional rights.4. Only a trial can establish these facts and end the Government’s ongoing violation of our rights.Let’s show the court that we’re watching!#JoinJuliana #ThisIsZeroHour”- Jamie Margolin February 16, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)

Activist Topics

Arguably, one of the more important topics of how Jamie came to identify with her community and identity is the issues that she about which she speaks. Jamie’s main topic for her activism is climate change.

Environment

She discusses climate change and how it is affecting people and the environment. She claims it is damaging and she is suffocating from the poor air quality. She states climate change is ruining lives, the environment and could start the apocalypse. The issue is killing people and animals, which have led to several extinctions. She identifies the things that climate change had affected. She brings up the weather changes which have led to flood, forest fires, and strong hurricanes. She identifies the amazon rainforest and the impact climate change has had on it as well. Throughout all of this, she places importance on life and the quality of life for both people and animals. One component of quality of life is clean water, which she highlights that Flint, Michigan has been without clean water for several years. She herself is affected by the air quality in her city due to all the air pollution; and therefore, she cannot breathe well. Not only does she highlight who and what is affected by climate change, she places blame to somethings she believes have encouraged the crisis of climate change. Specifically, she blames the fossil fuel industry and their drilling for oil and fossil fuels as a cause of climate change. She wants to focus on renewable energy sources instead of the natural gas, oil, and fossil fuels that are currently commonly used.

“We lobbied. We marched. The @ThisIsZeroHour movement is led by young WOC who will not be deterred by the immense power of the fossil fuel industry. The #ThisIsZeroHour movement is unstoppable and I am proud to be leading this revolution. #YouthtoPower”- Jamie Margolin August 28, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

While Jamie seems to argue against any negative factors regarding climate change, she does offer some solutions and aid to the problem. She discusses being able to preserve the environment and discusses going vegan and how reducing her meat consumption is one

environmentally conscious decision she is trying to make. Another project she was working on was requiring the gas industry to place warning labels on gas pumps to raise awareness of what these fossil fuels could do to the environment.

She highlights her organization, This is Zero Hour, many times in her journey of discussing climate change, which is a woman of color led climate change activism organization. She talks about climate change being toxic and urgent and that it is almost too late to handle the issue of climate change. She was once called a doomsayer by an adult for her stance on climate change and her urgency to fight against it.

She understands climate change is not something made up and is based on scientific research, so when the New Green Deal was proposed she was very excited as it could change the way environmental policies are written.

Gun Rights

While climate change is Jamie's main issue she focuses on, she has branched out into other issues as well. One of these issues is the issues revolving around gun rights. When the Parkland shooting occurred on February 14, 2018, she began supporting the youth activists that started speaking out against the current gun laws in The United States. She talks about gun violence and school shootings, and understands the journey of a youth activist. She reached out and tried to network with these activists as both she and the Parkland activists continued to advocate for their issues.

Justice

Notably, the issue of justice is a topic Jamie can cover in all of the issues she targets in her activism. She talks a lot about representation, specifically for the LBGTQ community. Jamie supported the #giveelsaagirlfriend campaign, in order to seek representation for her sexuality in

the media. She argued how having a lesbian Disney princess would have been helpful as she grew up.

She talks about equality and inclusions for both her sexual identity but also her race and ethnic identity. At one point she recognizes her own privilege both as an activist and a white passing woman of color, and so she speaks out about her recognition of these privileges. All these topics relate back to justice and how she believes in justice for all the marginalized parts of her identity.

“#GETELSAAGIRLFRIEND -as a gay girl I grew up depressed and anxious hiding myself (much like elsa) with no representation. If I had an explicitly queer elsa when I was still figuring things out, it would have spared me from so much pain. why cant we queer girls have a gay queen?” - Jamie Margolin October 23, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Female Empowerment

Finally, Jamie focuses on the issue of female empowerment and she does this throughout her Twitter history especially when discussing Zero Hour, as a woman of color led organization. She speaks out against many of the harmful societal norms such as body image and beauty. She really focuses on the rights women have as people and how she feels women should be treated. At one point, she calls out the media as discussing Latina women as exotic and by doing this encouraging Latina women to be objectified and marginalized.

Emotions

The final way that Jamie came identify with her activist community is through her emotions. Jamie is a lot more controversial with her issues, especially with climate change being a large topic in political conversations. Her Twitter feed is her discussing her dissatisfaction with how this issue is being handled and the importance of climate change. She talks a lot about being

angry and the anxiety she faces dealing with the issue climate change causes her. She is sad and worried about climate change which can lead to her panicking. She fears the consequence of this issue and how she is tired and exhausted from all of her work on this issue which can lead to her being overwhelmed. At one point, she labels herself as ashamed and guilty of not realizing her privilege. She talks about being haunted, in pain, and a wreck in regard to climate change. This could also be a form of sadness.

“I’m scared of failure, I’m scared of letting people down, I’m scared we won’t raise enough money, I’m scared I’m a shitty leader because I’ve already made so many mistakes and am so rash and impulsive and everyone always seems to have better judgment than me.” - Jamie Margolin November 22, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Though Jamie has a lot of these negative emotions, she still posts with positive emotions as well. She posts a lot about happiness, hope, her determination, and the enjoyment she gets from encountering the people she meets through her activism journey. She talks about how she is inspired and the respect she has for these individuals. She claims she is shameless in the pride she has in her multiple identities that have been discussed. She brings a lot of humor and jokes into her discussions of her identities and her activism. She is often eager for the events she attends and plans and is excited for these events and well as her meetings and awards she received. She uses the word “love” quite often to discuss her friends, her organization, her role models, and many other things. She claims she is honored and grateful for the opportunities she has.

“I am so excited to be speaking at this event on behalf of @ThisIsZeroHour on the Equity panel tomorrow! #gcas18,” - Jamie Margolin September 9, 2018 (Margolin, 2018).

Research Question 3: Jamie Maintaining, Revising, and Editing Her Identity

While Jamie uses these words and phrases to discuss how she connected to her activist community and identity, it is still necessary to look at tweets she has posted when she encounters a disruption. It is also important to view the responses these posts receive. Jamie seems to receive more negative feedback on her post than Marley. This may be due to her issues being more controversial in nature. In order to discuss how these disruptions occurred with her identities, it is helpful to explain this through the multiple identities she presents in her Twitter posts.

Activist Identity

The first identity to discuss is her identity of being an activist and specifically an activist that encourages political change. This identity can be seen in several tweets shown in Figures 8. These tweets, taken from the original sample of the study, were selected due to Jamie presenting disruption within the text of these posts. Additional tweets were sampled via Twitter's Advanced Search page that were posted on the same day or close to the same day, where other users made comments to either give positive support or negative feedback on her posts; and therefore, her identity.

The statement Jamie posted, specifically identifying disruptions on *Figure 8*, is a positive disruption as she identifies as a Liberal in the political system but the disruption is, she is working with a member of the opposite political side on the issue of climate change (Margolin, 2017).



Figure 8 Jamie Margolin August 25, 2017 (Margolin, 2017)

This post received very little activity with only two retweets and two likes. The next tweet is seen in *Figure 10* where she labels herself as a “political hoe”, while this may seem like a negative view of her identity and a negative statement, she is actually identifying her success as an activist (Margolin, 2018). She is receiving affirmation from two different people on her success as an activist and her work. This post again did not receive a lot of activity with only one retweet and eight likes.

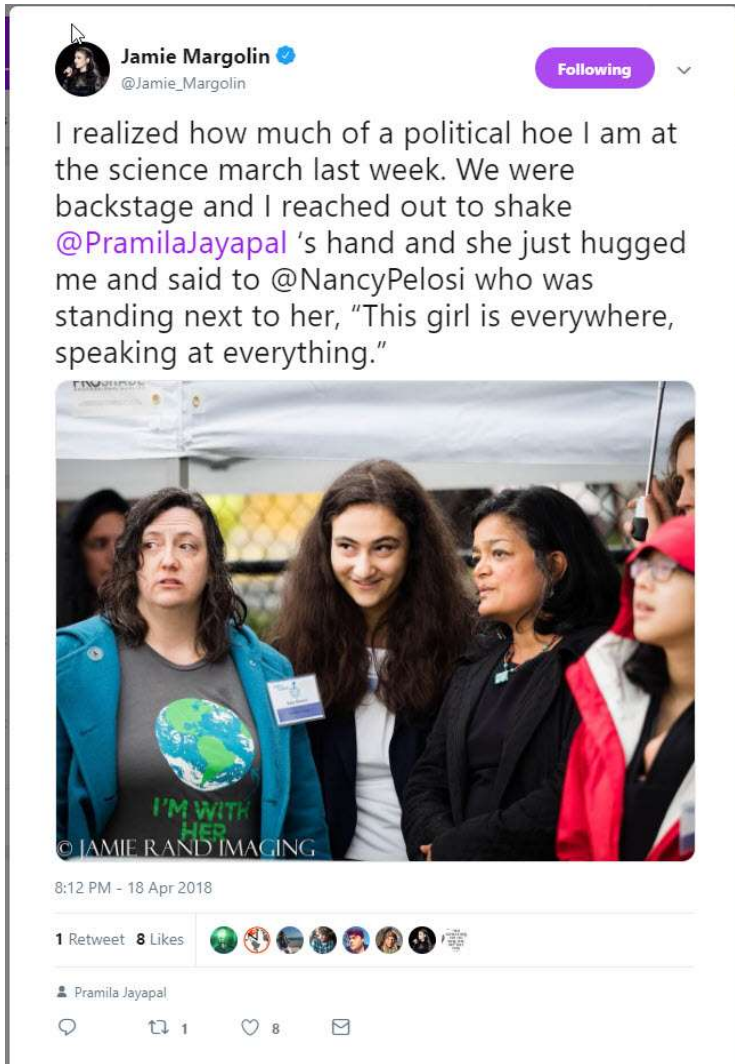


Figure 9 Jamie Margolin April 18, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

The following tweet, as seen in *Figure 10*, is one where Jamie affirms herself by turning down a big opportunity in favor of her continuing to fight her issue (Margolin, 2018). This negative disruption only reaffirmed her activist identity as she turned down this opportunity in favor of continuing to advocate for climate change. She received this offer because she was so successful in her work; therefore it, was also a positive disruption as well. This post received three retweets and 13 likes. An additional disruption is seen in *Figure 11*, while the comments

posted in response are seen in *Figure 12* that present as a disruption is also the first tweet to have comments attached to it. In the post, she discusses her appearance in regard to a publication which discussed her journey as an activist (Margolin, 2018; Margolin, 2018). This is identified as a negative disruption; however, the responses the post received are positive. This post received two retweets and 31 likes.



Figure 10 Jamie Margolin May 12, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)



Figure 11 Jamie Margolin May 16, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)



Figure 12 Jamie Margolin May 16, 2018 Comments (City Atlas, Small, Williams, Mann, Mikethemikeman, 2018)

This post also received (5) comments that were all positive offering affirmation of either Jamie’s physical appearance or her activism (City Atlas, Small, Williams, Mann, Mikethemikeman, 2018).

Jamie was once again featured in an entertainment/ news media publication shown in *Figure 13*. However, in this tweet she is upset with how the organization portrayed her, as she claimed it was not her words (Margolin, 2018). This negative disruption caused a combination of negative emotions towards the publication. This post received one retweet and four likes. It also

received one comment which affirmed her in her communication skills as an activist on social media.

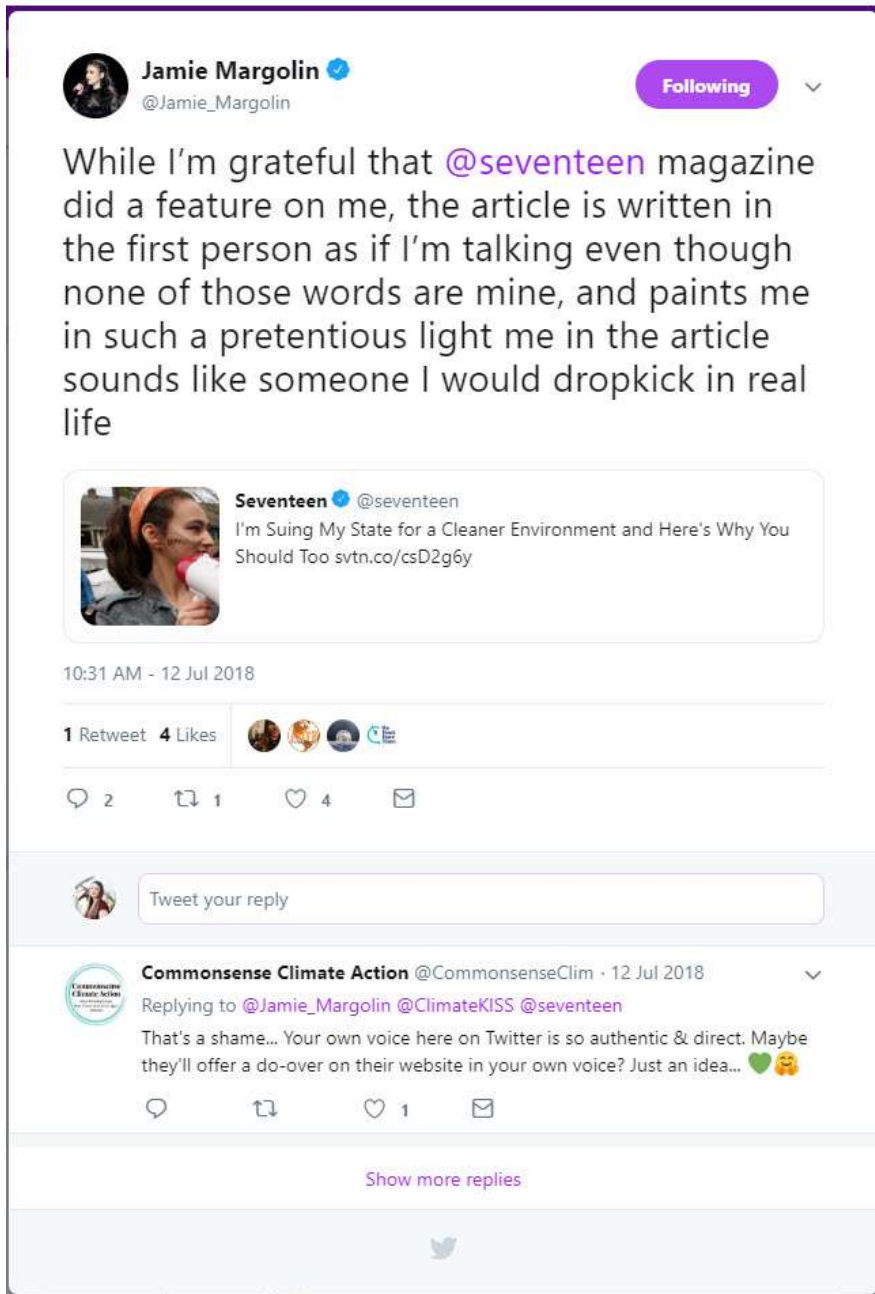


Figure 13 Jamie Margolin July 12, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

Teen Vogue is not the only group that has caused Jamie disruption and upset her. She explains in the tweet seen in *Figure 14* that one of her “pet peeves” is when people comment on how “cool” it is that she is invested in climate change and recommend her movies or books about it (Margolin, 2019). This disruption is an example of how she navigates her personal feelings about the issue, for example, not enjoying thinking about climate change but still feeling an obligation to speak and educate herself about the issue. This post received quite a bit of activity with 25 retweets and 92 likes.



Figure 14 Jamie Margolin January 19, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)

This post became a thread where she elaborated on this initial statement, seen in *Figure 15* (Margolin, 2019). It also received several comments from other users agreeing and claiming they also dislike discussing climate change, but also agreeing it is a topic that needs to be discussed. None of the comments on this post challenged her statement as seen in *Figure 16* (McClellan, Winchester, dex3703, Wiegard, Mann, 2019).



Figure 15 Jamie Margolin January 19, 2019 Thread (Margolin, 2019)

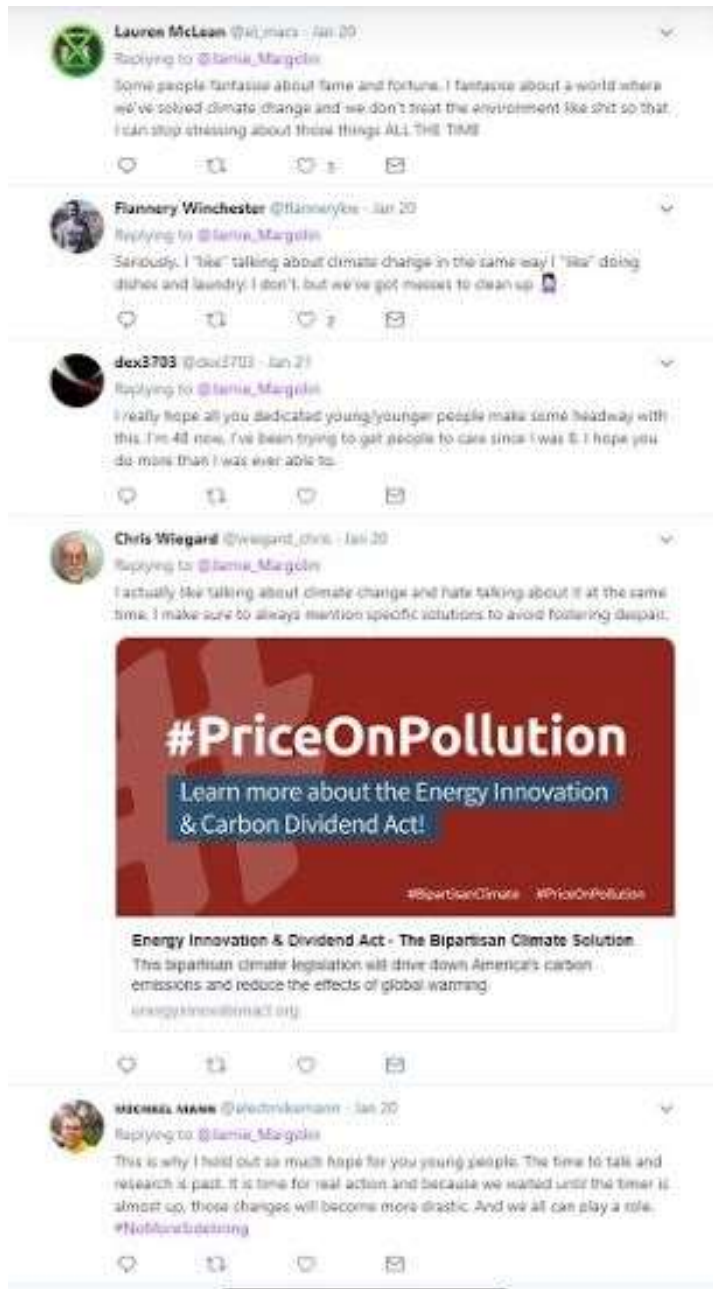


Figure 16 Jamie Margolin January 19, 2019 Comments (McClellan, Winchester, dex3703, Wiegard, Mann, 2019).

The next tweet, that is an example of a disruption, is Jamie responding to a publisher seen in *Figure 17*. The *Paris to Pittsburgh* made a comment about her leading the charge against climate change in the United States by creating This is Zero Hour. She argues she is not leading,

but rather supporting the other young women leading the organization (Margolin, 2019). This post received less activity than others with only five retweets and 36 likes, but no comments.



Figure 17 Jamie Margolin February 8, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)

The next tweet related to Jamie’s identity as an activist is found in *Figure 18* and *Figure 19*. This tweet is interesting because, in this post, Jamie checks her own privilege as a member of many different communities and realizes she could be doing more to support her fellow community members among the many different communities of which she is a part. She then tries to find ways she can better support her communities through using her success as an activist (Margolin, 2019). From the combination of the two tweets in this feed she received positive

feedback in the form of 3 retweets and 44 likes. She also received comments encouraging her to continue to perform the way she has previously and one asking her to continue to raise awareness about other international issues.



Figure 18 Jamie Margolin March 6, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)



Figure 19 Jamie Margolin March 6, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)

An interesting tweet Jamie posted was a comment towards a disruption where an adult wrote an article about her and her organization The Zero Hour. As seen in the tweet featured in *Figure 20*. The man called her a “militantly brainwashed doomsday leftist”, as she tagged the

article for users to continue to read the article in its entirety (Margolin, 2018). This post received four retweets, 13 likes, and 3 comments. The comments were positive claiming that receiving this negative feedback means that Jamie is doing well in her activism work, and “haters will hate”.

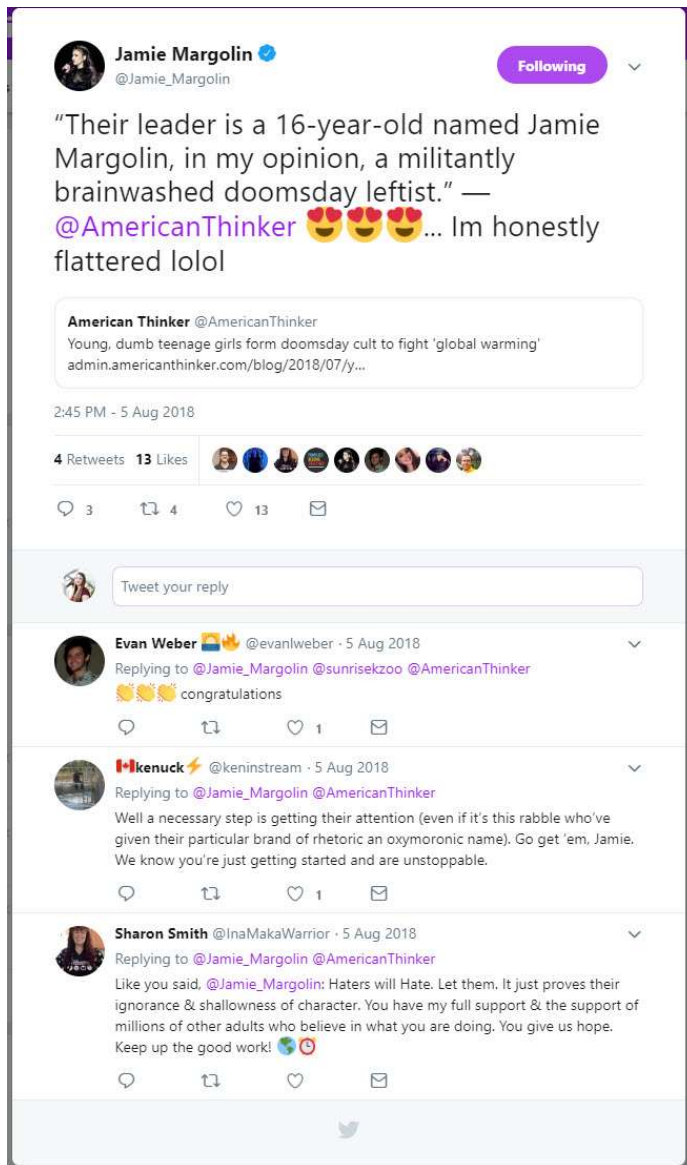


Figure 20 Jamie Margolin August 5, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

Ethnic and Race Identity

This tweet leads into the next identity and she has disruption within the collected tweets. Again it is the most recent Twitter; and therefore, it is important to discuss the earlier tweets about her Latina identity.



Figure 21 Jamie Margolin August 12, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

The first tweet, in this sample, about her Latina identity was in August 2018 where she called out people making fun of people of color's accents. She stands up for her mother who is made fun of in her work and people think of her as an "exotic thing" shown in *Figure 21*

(Margolin, 2018). She continues to stand up for Latina women by claiming their accents do not make them below others. This feed received six retweets and 29 likes, and one comment. The comment supported Jamie by commenting how “gnarly American English girls” are and girls that “squeak like Minnie Mouse”. This comment supported Jamie, but in the process also talks negatively about other women.

In the previously discussed tweet, shown in *Figure 18* and *19*, Jamie discussed her role as a Latina but she also defined herself as a “white passing Latina” which combines both race and ethnicity identities (Margolin, 2019). She claims she looks white; and therefore, has the associated privilege. In this tweet, she tries to come to terms with the privilege she claims she has not previously recognized. The activity on this feed again affirms her in these identities she presents.

To reiterate, this tweet is an example of a tweet that can have several identities presented inside of the text. In the same way, her identity as a female is presented in this tweet. The first tweet from the sample that mentions a disruption in her female identity is tweet shown in *Figure 10* which has been previously discussed where Jamie discusses a company wanting her sell out and sell their product because she’s “a pretty girl” (Margolin, 2018). This disruption is a more negative disruption as she clarifies that she, at first, was “flattered” but then realized what was happening. Again, this post received 3 retweet and 13 likes.

The next tweet from the sample that presented a disruption in Jamie’s identity as a female is the tweet in *Figure 21* where she calls out people that see Latina women as exotic (Margolin, 2018). This post is one where the intersexuality of being a woman and a member of the Latino community affects Jamie’s view of herself. In this situation she sees people treating women and specifically, Latina women, poorly and stereotyping them as “exotic”. This negative disruption

in Jamie’s identity gave her the opportunity to speak out against the racism she and her family experience. This post received one retweet and 12 likes, in addition to the one comment that supports Jamie by criticizing American English accents and “girls squeaking like Minnie Mouse”.

Religious Identity

Jamie experiences disruption in her identity as a Jew. This is seen in *Figure 22*, in the tweet Jamie discusses the disruption that the Jewish people are oppressing people in Palestine (Margolin, 2018). She struggles with this because the history the Jewish people have with being oppressed by the Russians in the past. This post received only four likes of activity and no comments or retweets. This is less activity than seen in other of her posts and may have had an impact on her reflection of this identity.



Figure 22 Jamie Margolin August 10, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

Jamie posted another disruption of her Jewish identity in *Figure 23*. In this tweet, she again calls out the Israeli government and policies (Margolin, 2019). She identifies herself as a Jew through several things in her life, such as her being “bat mitvah’d” who wears her star of David. She claims that not agreeing with the policies of the Israeli government does not make a person anti-Semitic (Margolin, 2019). This post received 27 retweets and 143 likes, which is the most activity from this sample. It also received comments supporting Jamie by agreeing with her with words such as “Truth”, “Amen sister!!! Shavua Tov!”, and “Thanks for bravely speaking out against the misconception.” The amount of this activity and the positive comment affirm her idea of maintaining her identity as a Jew, but also revising the identity to be one who does not stand with the Israeli government.



Figure 23 Jamie Margolin March 10, 2019 (Margolin, 2019)

All these tweets received positive feedback on Jamie’s identity; however, some received more than others. These disruptions were only identified as they led to the defining of her self-identification; therefore, further tweets were searched from the day of the post. For example, on August 5th, 2018 the tweet seen in *Figure 20* was posted (Margolin, 2018).

After searching Jamie's posts related to August 5th and climate change, several other posts surfaced, for example a tweet that received a lot of feedbacks was yet another post where Jamie called out the author of the article. This post occurred approximately two hours after the original post. This new post received 18 retweets, 95 likes, and 18 comments that were all positive and affirming comments toward Jamie or negative toward the American Thinker author. This post demonstrates increased positive affirmation in the wake of a critical disruption of Jamie's identity.

Notably, a date that was searched was the disruption of her correcting Paris to Pittsburgh that she is not leading a movement but rather supporting those who are leading. This post was made February 8, 2019 (Margolin, 2019). A time frame of a week was searched approximately three days before and after the original disruption. The search terms used to find these posts were ones that mention Jamie's handle in this time frame. Two posts were found during this time frame of a week. One was where Jamie posted about the Global Climate Strike on March 15, 2019 (Margolin, 2019). She posted this post twice and received a combined 170 retweets, 354 likes, and 69 comments. Unlike previous tweets, this tweet received a lot of negative comments. Some of the comments are shown below in *Figure 24*, as an example of how these users responded to Jamie's platform.


 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @ExtinctionR and 9 others
 So we will follow your lead and disconnect all of our electronic devices and cut off our electricity and go back to living like the 1800's. I am down with that, are you ??
 1 reply 1 like


Phil Kruse @pfxr64 · Feb 4
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @Alyssa_Milano and 9 others
 you should all walk into the oceans and to show your resolve, stay there until you get what you demand.
 1 reply 1 like


Thomas O'Connor @okie1011 · Feb 4
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @ExtinctionR and 9 others
 What will the excuse be when we don't see the world end in 12 years. Will people be like see we saved the world.
 1 reply 1 retweet 7 likes


Natcouch @Natcouch1 · Feb 4
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @ExtinctionR and 9 others
 The UN has admitted that "Climate Change" is a money grab to destroy Capitalism and redistribute wealth from wealthy nations to third world nations. Y'all should be worried about something that actually exists like, um, I don't know, the UN LYING and trying to steal our money?!!
 2 retweets 7 likes


Leasehound @ToddFrels · Feb 5
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @Alyssa_Milano and 9 others
 Nutjob.
 1 reply

This Tweet is unavailable.


SaraTheWeeze @saraismyhandle · Feb 4
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @ExtinctionR and 9 others
 Is the hollywood elite going to doze all those mansions and start planting trees to help this crisis? I bet not.
 1 reply 1 like


Lee @Darkmoon01 · Feb 4
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @Alyssa_Milano and 9 others
 You lost me at 12 years. All I hear now is blah blah blah.
 1 reply


Shirley M. Wilcox @smw85206 · Feb 5
 Replying to @Jamie_Margolin @Alyssa_Milano and 9 others
 This is a rouse for people like Al Gore to get rich on. Al own professor :taught that it isn't true! My Gosh you guys quite believing others and use the brain 🧠 God gave you!

Figure 24 Jamie Margolin March 15, 2019 Comments

Most of the comments on this post are negative and are to be considered to be a disruption to Jamie’s identity. In many of these comments, the users also tagged Alyssa Milano, a famous actress and activist. This is due to a tweet Jamie made on August 15, 2018 as seen in *Figure 25*, stating her governor does not care about action against climate change (Margolin, 2018). This post received 369 retweets, an estimated 1,200 likes, and 12 positive comments. A post receiving this much feedback is already an affirmation in itself, but yet a specific affirmation came when Alyssa Milano supported Jamie.

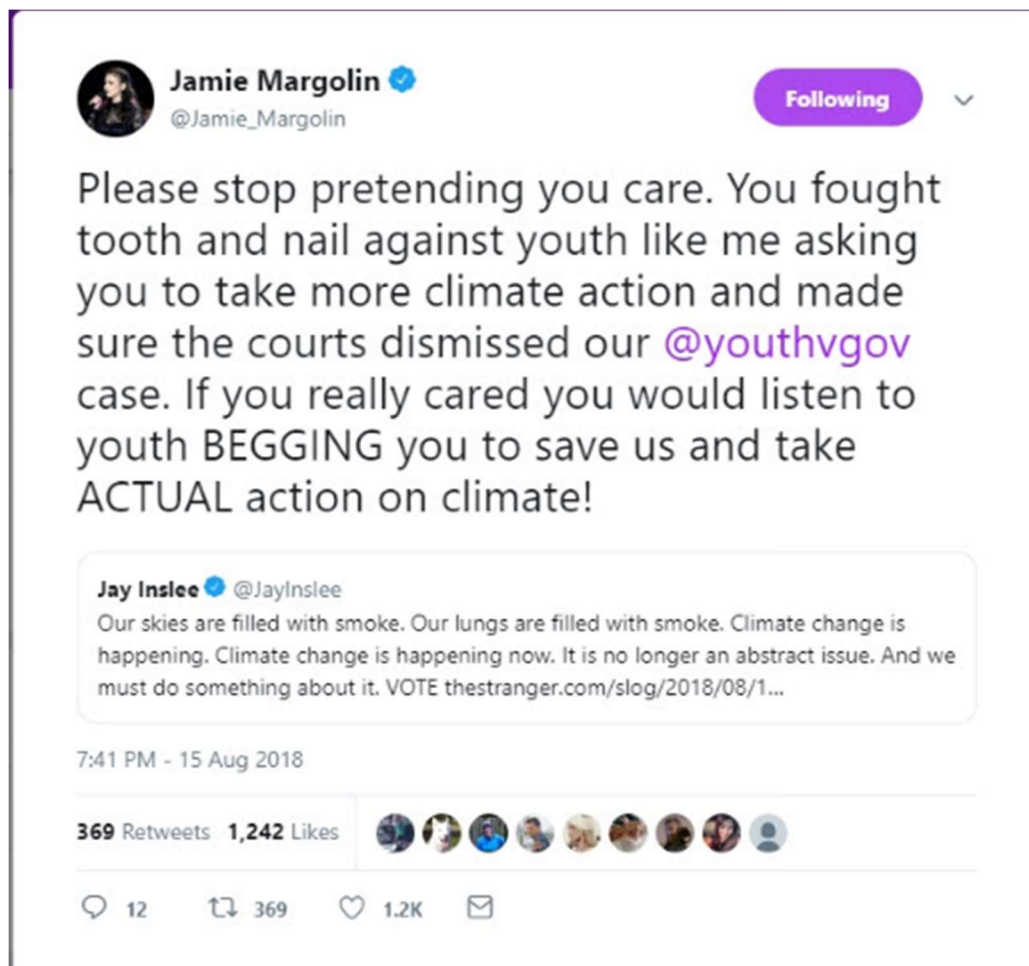


Figure 25 Jamie Margolin August 15, 2018 (Margolin, 2018)

This can be seen in *Figure 26* where she retweeted Jamie’s tweet. This specific feedback may affirm Jamie’s identity, by having a high-profile celebrity address her posts personally, and encourage her to continue to pursue her current activism.

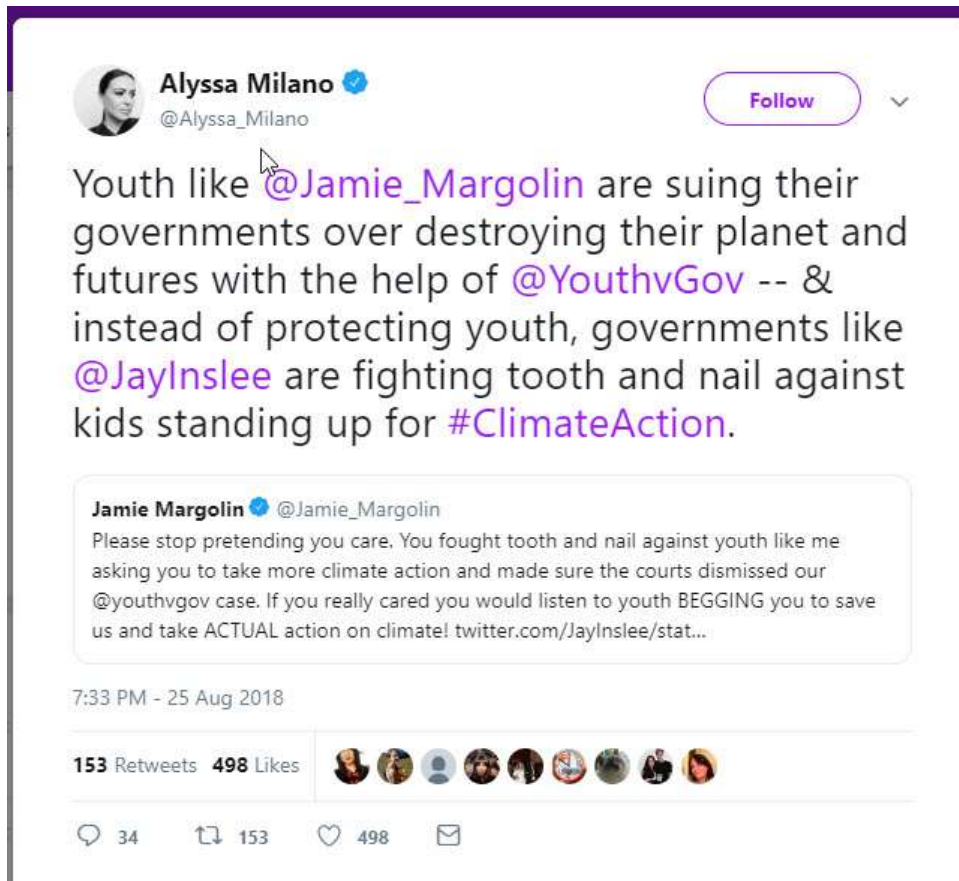


Figure 26 Jamie Margolin August 15, 2018 Alyssa Milano Recognition (Milano, 2018)

Reflection of Feedback

After reviewing the initial sampled tweets and the additionally tweets sourced from the timing of the initial disruption in the identity statement, Jamie does receive negative feedback from other users on social media, however, the amount of negative feedback she receives is small compared to the amount of positive feedback she receives in the form of retweets, likes,

and other comments. For the majority of these comments people are agreeing with Jamie and encouraging her to continue her work in activism.

Additionally, with the added support from high profile people and organizations such as Alyssa Milano, *Teen Vogue* and other publications, Jamie continues to be affirmed in the multiple identities she presents on the internet. Some of these identities may receive more attention than others, such as her identity as a climate change activist.

Cross-Case Analysis

While both young women, in this study, have been discussed individually about their process of creating and presenting their identities online, several similarities and differences have been identified. Within each research question, key findings have led to the discovery of how Marley and Jamie perform as they navigate their identity and the use of social media and social media feedback.

How Youth Activist Construct Their Respective Identities on Twitter

In answering the question of how these youth activists construct their respective identities on Twitter, there seemed to be more differences between the two cases than similarities. Among the similarities is both girls are youth and identify as such and both use the words such as “youth” and “kid” as indicators of this identity. However, Jamie uses words the words “teen” and “minor” in her discussion of her age. She distinguishes herself through her generational title of “Generation Z” or “Gen Z”, which Marley does not do. Jamie does this to highlight that her generation is the one to inherit all the damage climate change is causing and to separate her generation from the slightly older generation of the “millennial generation”. This may be due to her being older than Marley as Marley is 14 as of now. She was 11 when she began her activist journey. Jamie, on the other hand began, at her activism at 14 and is now 17. This difference in

age can potentially explain several differences in the young activists' actions and discussions of their experiences and their activism journey.

In the answers to this question both girls experience the intersectionality of being women of color in their daily life. This concept has previously been discussed in both cases individually; however, it is pertinent to discuss how this theme has been highly prevalent in both girls' stories, not only in their activism but in their daily lives as well. While there is the difference in the girls' ethnic and race identities, as Marley is black and Jamie labels herself as a "white passing" Latina, they both highlight at least one situation where they felt their identities as women and as a person of color were challenged.

The final similarity in the results of this question was the identity of being an activist. Both young women founded organizations to combat the issue for which they have chosen to advocate. Marley's organization is #1000blackgirlbooks, which focuses on raising awareness of the lack of black female protagonists in literature. Jamie's organization is This is Zero Hour, a women of color lead organization that is focused on raising awareness of climate changes and trying to persuade policy changes regarding current climate change policies. The difference here is, in the girls' chosen issues, the youth are dedicated to fighting. Both women, however, label themselves as leaders and spokespersons in order to aid in the description of their activist identity.

Some differences of how these activists constructed their identity have been discussed within their similarities. Still some others were found. One is that Jamie focuses more on titles to develop her sense of identity. For example, she labels herself as an ally and a survivor, in addition to the titles that both young women identify with discussed in the previous paragraph.

Additionally, Jamie has several identities that she presents on her social media that Marley does not. For example, Jamie presents her religious and sexual identities. She identifies as a Jewish person by using terms such as “certified” “bat mitzv’d” and “David Star wearing” to develop this identity. Marley does not discuss her religious identity throughout the tweets collected in the sample. Jamie identifies as a lesbian and uses her platform to discuss issues facing the LBGTQ community to strengthen her identity as a member of this community.

Overall, the girls share similarity in how they construct their identities as young women of color activists. However, even in these similarities in the construction of these identities, there are differences in how they do so. Additionally, Jamie seems to present two more identities that Marley did not. These differences could be due to age as Marley is just entering adolescence and may not have a firm grasp on her sexual identity. It could also be Marley's religious and sexual identities are not pertinent to her activist platform; and therefore, she does not reference them in her identity construct behaviors.

How Youth Came to Identify with Their Respective Activist Community

Call to Actions

The next section that reflected similarities and differences is how both girls came to identify with their respective activist community. Both young women call the public to action in their tweets. While this call to action is different in the issues, they ask people to fight for, they both ask for people to think critically and support their organization through people power and monetary means. They both do this by using words such as “rise” and “empower”, by asking their audience to join their movement and attend the meetings and events they have planned or will attend. The girls also call the people to perform different actions as well. Marley uses much more informative means to educate her audience and encourage them to make movements. She

educates them via these calls to action while Jamie uses much more emotional responses to call people to action. She uses words such as “resist”, “pressure” and “expose” as actions she wishes the people will take in regard to the issue of climate change and the current views of climate change.

Activist Actions

The girls perform similar actions which helped them come to terms with their activist community. They both founded organizations with the purpose of fighting the issue they see in their communities. Additionally, they set goals, attended meetings, planned events, and through these actions they are able to build their networks of influencers, activists, and supporters. In their work of activism, they both have also received awards for their work. While they have performed these similar actions, they have done other things differently. Marley has published a book in her time as an activist. This book is about her journey as an activist and she added another book to her campaign of #1000blackgirlbooks. Jamie has sued The State of Washington for their environmental policies. She has attended marches where she performed actions such as marching and chanting, specifically on the step of The Capitol of Washington D.C.

Reflection of Self

The girls also share similarities with how they reflect on themselves often. Both Marley and Jamie discuss their feelings toward events and meeting people. For example, both girls use phrases such as “I can’t wait”, “doing my best”, and “I love”. These phrases are often directed at the young women's platforms, events, and meetings they attend for the purpose of engaging in activism. However, Jamie has reflected on herself as an activist in a negative way as well. She has labeled herself as a “procrastinator” and claimed that she can seem “obsessive” at times.

Activist Organizations

The young women's activist organizations also played a role in how they came to identify with their activist organizations. The similarities are both activists founded their organization and both use social media to connect with people. While the public sees both organization use "catchy" hashtags and names to connect with their audience, the perception of the organizations can be different. Marley's organization is much less radical and controversial than Jamie's. While the public sees Marley speaking on *The Ellen Show* and attending events, Jamie's organization sued The State of Washington, and held marches on the steps of The United States Capital. Jamie's organization can be labeled as a rebellion of the way climate change is currently discussed and handled. Even though this may be the perception of what the organization does, both organizations can be seen has committing acts of service in advocating for these issues and making a contribution to society.

The organizations Jamie and Marley have founded often perform the same actions as well. They plan events and set goals. They spread awareness of their associated issue. Jamie often highlights the "behind the scenes" work she does and discusses the to-do lists associated with her organization and connected events.

Finally, regarding the activism organizations, the activists receive benefits from working on these issues and building these networks. Both obtain larger networks and resources and feel as though they have a voice and are making change. Marley was able to publish a book, potentially with the help of the network and resources she gained from her activism. Jamie was offered a job from recognition for her work.

Role Models

Role models are an additional way that both girls have come to terms with their activist identity. Both look up to activists but while Marley's activist role models are older adults, Jamie's are closer to her age and are her peers. Marley has a familial connection with her main role model, her mother. While Jamie's relationship with her role models is friendship. Additionally, both girls have political role models in Hillary Clinton, but Jamie also identifies Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as a role model. The actions of these role models towards the activist are similar with recognizing them and interacting with them. The girls perform similar actions in quoting their role models and flattering them.

Technology

Both young women girls use technology to connect with their community; however, Jamie highlights several aspects of the media that Marley does not. For example, Jamie urges a writer for Disney to “give Elsa a girlfriend”, a Disney Princess who many have questioned her sexual identity. Jamie also discusses news media more by quoting CNN or Fox News. She utilizes a new phrase coined by Donald Trump “fake news” to discuss inaccurate news media portrayals. The internet plays a big role in both girls' platform as they both use social media to tag and follower other users. Jamie makes a distinction between “real life” and her life as portrayed on social media. That is not seen in Marley's posts. She discusses harassment and peer pressure in how it relates to her feelings regarding social media and her work in activism.

Activism Topic

The topic of both Jamie and Marley's activism is a vital piece of how they have come to terms with their activist identity, some may even call it their mission. Both girls expand on these issues and also incorporate other issues for which they advocate. Marley's main issue is related

to social representation and justice. This issue is something for which Jamie advocates. Marley fights for justice for people who share her racial identity, while Jamie fights for justice for those affected by climate change and members of the LBGTQ community. Some of the areas Marley branches out to in her work in activism is education and literacy. She also fights for women empowerment; which Jamie also speaks out for as well. Some of the areas Jamie branches out into are LBGTQ rights and Gun Rights especially after the Parkland shooting in 2018.

Role of Emotions

The final way both activists come to term with their activism community is through their emotions. Even though both girls have positive and negative feelings, each of them have differing levels of each. Marley is mostly a positive persona on her online posts. While she does occasionally identify negative emotions like “scared or “nervous”, she more often identifies positive emotions such as “excited”, “love”, “honored”, and “grateful”. Jamie on the other hand more often identifies negative emotions, especially in regard to climate change. She feels “fear”, “anxiety”, “tired” and “exhausted”. At one point she even claims she feels “haunted” and “overwhelmed” from the stress of climate change and her organization. While these negative emotions may be present more often, she still identifies positive emotions such as “love”, “excited”, and “honored” to describe her feelings about things that occur in her activist career.

The Role of the Government

The only topic that Jamie uses to identify with her activist community that Marley does not, is the topic of government. Jamie discusses in this section some of the things that upset her about the current way the government is run and the current governmental standing on climate change. Marley does not necessarily go into depth on different political parties and policy like Jamie’s does. This could be due to the fact Marley's issue is not one that can be solved through

politics. Marley does however make a comment during the 2016 election about “girls everywhere are sad right now”, this could be argued as a political comment; however, it could also be argued as a female empowerment statement. This comment is the only political comment in the sample Marley posts. Jamie, on the other hand, posted about the government in her state quite frequently.

These young female activists have both similarities and differences in how they came to terms with their activist community. Some of these common main topics were through their organizations, their role models, and their feels in regard to the issues for which they oppose, the events they planned and attended, and the people with which they interacted.

How the Youth Activist Identity is Maintained, Revised and Expanded

Finally, the activists share similarities and have differences in how they maintain, revise, and expand on the multiple identities they present on their social media pages. Both received positive disruptions to their activist identity as they partner with others to resolve their specific issues. Marley partnered with her mother’s organization while Jamie partnered with a member of the Republican Party. Marley experienced several negative disruptions to her activist identity as she made mistakes as an activist, and Jamie identifies a negative disruption in a similar way as she checks her own privilege seen in tweet Jamie RQ3.21. Both negative disruptions were turned positive by the comments and activity the posts received from other users.

Jamie had a unique event found in the sample that was not found in Marley’s tweest when an adult attacked her activist identity. He did this through publishing an article calling her a “militantly brainwashed doomsday leftist” as seen in the tweet Jamie Doomsday.1. She responded by claiming she was “flattered” and reposted the article so others could read it. This led to her followers responding in a positive manner affirming her identity.

Gender identity is specifically an area where disruptions occurred in Jamie and Marley's sampled tweets. For Jamie this occurs when a business wanted to hire her, but she rejected the offer after realizing they just wanted to build on her success with This is Zero Hour and because she was a "pretty girl". She also had an instance where she calls out people for stereotyping Latina women as exotic and explained how it affects the women in her family. This event is an example of where the intersectionality of being a woman and being a person of color can cause disruption to two different identities. Marley had a similar event occur when she was in middle school and a boy called her "Jaden Smith" in an attempt to make fun of her and "masculinize her". Both tweets received positive feedback as the girl addressed the issues on their social media pages.

As discussed in the previous paragraph both girls experienced disruptions to their racial and ethnic identity. Building off the previous discussed tweets, Jamie again had the disruption where she checked her privilege of being a "white passing Latina". She did so in order to open this discussion and receive feedback from the users who may be members of her ethnic and racial community. Marley, unlike Jamie, was able to discuss the disruption with a member of her racial community and then was able to share it with her social media followers. Both young women found the need to discuss the disruptions in order to process them. Jamie did so online solely, while Marley did so in person and then again online.

Jamie has two identities that have disruptions that Marley did not. The is first because Marley did not discuss her religion in the sampled tweets. The disruption regarding her religious identity was due to her disagreement with the Israeli government's policy and how she decided that does not mean she is anti-Semitic. Again, this disruption in identity is not present in Marley's identity as she did not discuss these different areas of identity in the sampled tweets.

Overall, in the reflection of the tweets, Marley received proportionally more positive comments than Jamie when considering the additional sourced tweets from the day of disruptions. However, Jamie received more overall activity throughout the four years of tweets collected. She also received more comments and posted more tweets over the past four years. Even though Jamie received many negative comments, she continued to post about the issues for which she was being attacked and continued to pursue her activism career. While Marley does not post as often, she still receives positive affirmation on her tweets, which may encourage her to continue pursuing activism as well.

As seen through the comparison of the two case studies of Jamie Margolin and Marley Dias, these activists have many things in common regarding their social media behaviors, their activism career, and the disruptions they have presented in these tweets. These similarities are not without their differences such as the issue they chosen to represent, their ethnic and racial identity, and their age. Additionally, these young women have differences in how others react to their posts and their additional identities they discuss or do not discuss.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study has explained two different cases that were studied for the purpose of understanding how youth activist are constructing their multiple identities on social media, specifically Twitter. Within these results, the study has found further connections with past research and literature, while other studies were not found to agree with the results. Further, these theoretical expectations from the study are applied and discussed as they were met or not met in the results of the two case studies and their cross-case analysis.

The purpose of this study was to explore how youth activists construct their identity through their social media usage. In the pursuit of discovering how youth may achieve this through social media three questions were proposed:

1. How do youth activists construct their respective identities on Twitter?

The results of this question support findings from previous literature that will further the discussion of how Jamie and Marley constructed their identities. This is through La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014), Ward (2017), and Burke (2008).

2. How youth came to identify with their respective activist community? That is, *how* and not *why* the activist identity was formed. (identity control)

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and Goffman (1959) continue to support the discussion that was previously mentioned. As La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014), Ward (2017), and Burke (2008) focus primarily on social media research, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) support the discussion of civic identity, and Goffman (1959) discusses identity development in general.

3. How the youth activists' identities are maintained, revised and expanded? (social exchange)

Finally, the literature from Burke's (2006) *Identity Control Theory* and Lawler, Thye, Yoon's (2015) *Social Exchange Theory* helped in designing the New Combined Model seen in *Figure 3*. Within this, the discussion will continue to build off the findings in Research Question 1 and 2 and further explore how Jamie and Marley maintained, revised and expanded their identities and how that process relates to the New Combined Model.

Research Question 1: How Youth Activist Construct Their Identity on Twitter

In these two cases both activists used posts to discuss their self-concept of their identity. Both girls did so through labeling themselves as the identity title for which they identified, for example "I'm a Latina" for Jamie, or "I'm a black female" for Marley. They also labeled identities they do not agree with, such as Jamie discussing she was not a "leader" of an organization but a "supporter". As previously discussed by Ward (2017), youth often can use these social media applications to further develop their perception of their identity, which is what was seen in the identity statements found in these posts. This is additionally supported by Boyd (2008) as they each discuss how social media allows youth to post information relating to the identity youth are currently using.

In this display of youth actively constructing their identities or by labeling themselves with identity titles, they are constructing a sense of self-worth and success. This is then measured in the identity statement as discussed by La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014). Youth may use different ways to measure their success; and therefore, self-worth, and a positive sense of self (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). The ways they measure this success will be discussed in the discussion of research question three.

Research Question 2: How Youth Came to Identify with Their Respective Activist Community

Jamie and Marley came to identify with their respective identities not only through their social media behaviors but also through the considered traditional means of interacting and creating beliefs of the physical world, or as Jamie identified it the “real world”. This finding supports the implication that youth develop their identities in multiple contexts (Arnold, 2017).

While this implication was originally applied to youth development programs understanding identity is developed through multiple contexts, this finds further help to explain that social media is one of the contexts that youth can feel free to do so. It is important to understand that social media is not the only place youth will come to terms with their communities and respective identities.

Activist organizations were another way that both activists found their activist community. As discussed previously, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identified three levels of citizenship. Both activists achieved the first level of citizenship by endeavoring to be of good character and seeing how it can help their community. They do not stop their civic identities there. They accomplish the second level by being involved in the structures around them, by encouraging others to vote, and attending meetings in these structures such as the government (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Similarly, though, they achieve the final level of citizenship by actively challenging the current organizations and structures in their environment. The majority of this is seen through their activism. In Marley’s case, she questions why there are not many female black protagonists in literature. In Jamie’s case, she questions the current views and policies on climate change. Both girls found use of online communities with which to engage

when working on developing these different levels of citizenship as they progress through their activism.

This online community of activists is a way for youth to find their space in their online world. Since both of these young women formed their own organizations, it can be inferred that they already had a sense of an activist identity within this community, but the more action the activist took and the organization grew, the more they came to identify with their respective community. As Goffman (1959) stated, youth are continuously developing their identity as they interact with their environment, be that in person through the actions they are taking or online as they create posts about these actions and how they see themselves.

Additionally, it was found the activists in this study used role models as a way to come to terms with their activist identity. While previous research such as Blease (2015), La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014), and Ward (2017) place a high level of importance on peers, there is not much discussion on the importance of role models. It is important to note, in the case of Jamie Margolin, she identifies some of her peers and fellow activists as her role models. This study found less emphasis on the role of peers and more on the individuals the youth admire and respect, especially regarding activism behaviors and recognition received by these role models.

It is important to note that both young activists had caring adult role models that helped further their self-identity and how they may fit into society. As seen in the results sections for Marley, her mother was her most frequently referenced caring adult role model; however, she also referenced women such as Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama, and Patrisse Cullor. For Jamie, her caring adults were Hillary Clinton, Alyssa Milano, and her mother. All of these adult women, at some point in these girls' activist careers, made a comment or aided in supporting the activist

careers Marley and Jamie are pursuing. This support assisted in both young women coming to terms with the multiple identities they are creating via social media.

Research Question 3: How Youth Activist Identity is Maintained, Revised and Expanded

This study posited two theoretical expectations regarding the proposed new combined model seen in *Figure 3*. The results of this study assist in the discussion whether these two theoretical expectations were supported or not. As seen in the results section, there were several disruptions that occurred in both cases and to multiple of their identities as well.

In looking at the results in these disruptions, theoretical expectation one of: **Youth will alter their posting behaviors due to the feedback they receive from their peers on these online posts**, was seen in the way the activist constructed their identities over time. Within this the expectation was youth would **use positive affirmations and increased activity on posts as a confirmation of the identity they desire to achieve**. I expected posts that received more positive feedback will be repeated in style and language, or posts that received negative or less feedback will be less likely to be repeated. Typically posts related to the activist's issue received positive feedback. In the case of Jamie, both positive and negative feedback was found. This mix of positive and negative comments did not support the theoretical expectation 1, as Jamie continues to post similar content even though she has received such negative feedback attacking her on her social media posts. This continues to support Blease (2015) in the discussion of which posting behaviors are repeated. This may be due to the positive feedback she receives on earlier posts already affirming her identity, or the comments encouraging her that "haters will hate" and telling her, negative responses mean she is succeeding in her efforts and this is also affirming her identity.

The second theoretical expectation of: over time, in order to narrow their identity, youths' posts will become more focused on items and issues that received more positive feedback and the youth will begin to present a common issue/topic as for which they are advocating, was mostly supported. Jamie's feed is often still a mix of different topics and activist issues she supports; however, the main issue she supports and posts about is still climate change and the different ways she works to advocate for climate change policy. Marley's case, on the other hand, still supports this theoretical expectation as her page mostly focuses on social representation and empowering those in her racial community to continue to work for representation.

Regarding the new combined model, the cycle proposed in *Figure 3*, did occur; however, it was mostly seen with positive feedback instead of negative feedback.

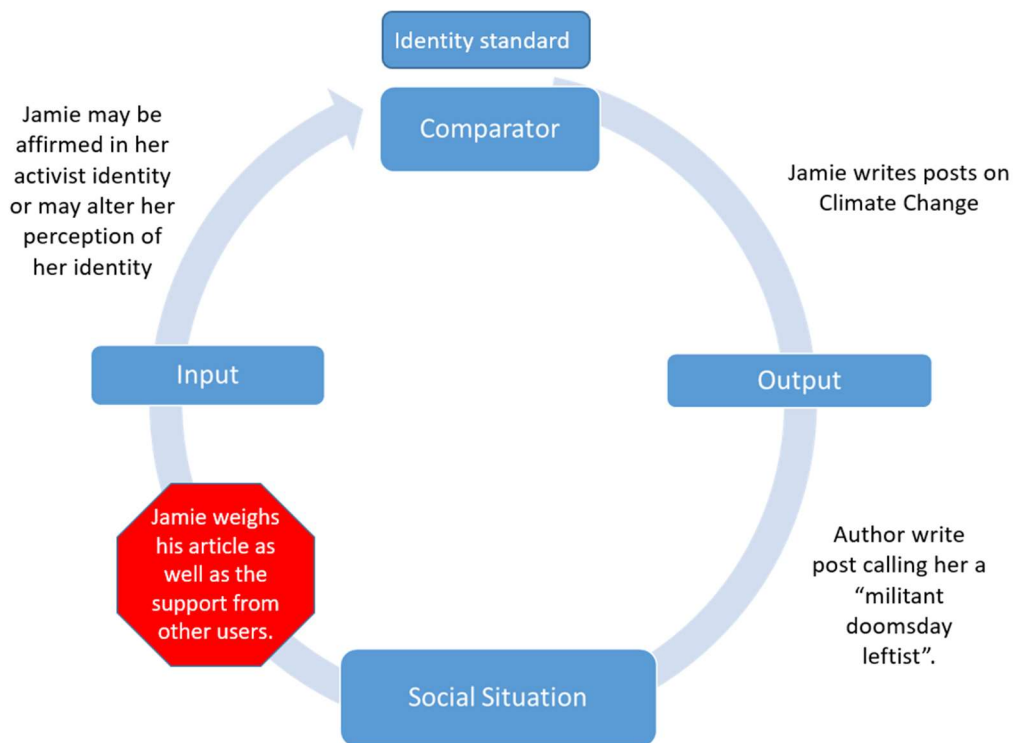


Figure 27 New Model Applied: Jamie Activist Identity

An example as to how the new model can be used in discussing how a negative disruption can be seen using the new model in seen in *Figure 27*. As previously discussed, Jamie is a climate change activist. She, therefore, decides to post on the issue of climate change, which can include different events related to climate change, policy changes regarding environmental movements, etc. She then had an adult attack this identity by posting a negative article calling her a “militant doomsday leftist”. In response to this article she posted it on her feed and received positive feedback from other users on her success as an activist. Once she posted her response and it received feedback, she then weighed the positives and the negatives of her posting behaviors and how she is viewed as an activist. She then takes these perceptions and may be affirmed in her activist identity or she may alter her perception of her identity to better fit what she now believes an activist to look.

This means the perception of the identity was usually supported in this study, and even when an identity disruption did occur, such as Jamie being called a “doomsdayer,” she still received positive feedback in the wake of that event. Additionally, many of the disruptions were seen in specific posts and not in the comments as expected, and expected reflections on disruptions were not seen in the expected comments. Even though the intended reflections were not observed through the expected comments, it does not mean the reflection did not occur. Both the arguments that Burke’s (2006) *Identity Control Theory* and Lawler, Thye, & Yoon’s (2015) *Social Exchange Theory* pose are still supported by this study, just not at the depth that was intended.

What was unexpected was the youth did not articulate their self-worth on the bases of the activity these posts received. However, they did articulate self-worth on the bases of recognition from peers and role models when these people tagged or reached out to them, which supports La

Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014) on the importance of peers. It does not support that “likes” are how youth measure this. In other words, it should be defined more broadly to say that peer recognition on social media is how youth measure self-worth and social standing. This can be through likes, comments, tagging, or reposting of posts. Additionally, in this area, both cases have positive peer relations with other youth users with which they interact. As Ward (2017) stated, if these peer relations were negative, it could hinder the activist's success in developing a coherent identity. As seen in this study the positive feedback combined with positive peer relations was a successful tool in helping them develop a concrete sense of their identity.

This also supports Erikson (1968) in how youth use social media to “try on different identities as they navigate through the crisis of identity versus identity confusion. Youth use the measure of their peers’ feedback in supporting their identity statements. Additionally, Erikson (1968) is supported through his identification that in this stage youth may determine their own ideologies and political identities during the stage of adolescence (Yates, & Youniss, 1998; Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014; Kirshner, 2007).

Recommendations

The results and discussion lead to several recommendations for different groups of people who could be impacted by the results and findings of this study.

Youth Practitioners

The following recommendations are provided for youth practitioners:

1. Read research that discusses how social media is a context for youth development.
2. Host events and programs that discuss positive social media behaviors.
3. Read and attend trainings that discuss how identity can be developed on social media.
4. Design programs to allow for social media to be used.

5. Create programs that focus on social media uses such as blogging, and social media marketing.
6. Encourage positive adult mentorships in your programs.
7. Hire staff that can fulfill these positive adult role model positions.
8. Instill guidelines for youth and staff engagement on social media sites.

Parents

1. Have open discussions with your children about social media behaviors.
2. Explain the ramifications of social media, the potential for negative feedback, and define cyberbullying.
3. Understand that your child is still engaging in developmental challenges such as defining who they are through these new technologies.
4. Continue to be informed about the changes to social media, if you want to be able to be confident in your child's ability to use social media for the positive developmental skills they are trying to learn, you also need to be able to use this technology.
5. Encourage your child to connect with positive role models in their lives through social media.
6. Connect with those role models on social media yourself and monitor your child's social media interaction with other adults.

Future Research

The following future research recommendations are provided:

1. Attend conferences and read articles that discuss social media research.
2. Use social media data to examine youth behaviors.

3. Utilize qualitative research methods to obtain data that could fully explore youth activism stories regarding identity development.
4. Build another study, based on this model, focusing specifically on negative feedback and how it would affect a youth's behavior on social media.
5. Future research could also address a different population of youth, or study a different social media platform, for example Instagram.

Limitations

Several limitations have been identified in this study in the scope and methods used to complete the study. First, this study used a small sample of both the youth, the study covered, and the tweets that were sampled. There were only two cases, Jamie Margolin and Marley Dias this study covered. Within this study, was limited focus of these young women as they both focus on issues regarding justice. Additionally, their entire Twitter feed was not sampled and was sampled using potential identity statements in the Twitter Advanced Search Page.

This study was limited in the time frame for data collection. Since both Marley and Jamie only began their Twitter activism in 2016, there is no information as to if they had begun their activist and civic identity development prior to the creation of these accounts. Additionally, the use of social media could have been different prior to 2016. Time continues to be a limitation to this study as social media and the internet, in general, continue to change frequently, and often dramatically.

This study focused specifically on a specific population of female youth activists. With this narrow of a population, it can be difficult to generalize the findings broadly across age, gender, or activism topic. This study was a qualitative study and used values coding. These be

limitations as personal bias needs to be considered when coding and interpreting the results of the study.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This was a qualitative case study focused on female youth activists and how they engage on social media for the purpose of identity development. The two cases studied were Marley Dias, a social representation/justice activist, and Jamie Margolin, a climate change activist. Using Twitter's Advanced Search Page, the activists' tweets were sampled, using purposeful sampling methods, and the samples were implemented by using search terms related to identify statements. After collecting a total of # tweets, values coding was used in order to further understand the ways youth may develop their identities on social media, which was the purpose of this study.

The codes created were organized into themes that allowed for the research questions of the study to be answered. In answering the first question of how do youth activist construct their respective identities on Twitter? It was found that both girls, using labels and identifying characteristics relating to their age, race/ethnic identity, gender, found their identity as activists. There were some identities Jamie discusses that Marley did not, such as her sexual identity and her religious identity.

Similarities and differences among both activists investigated, allowed us to look at positive and not so positive interactions. In the results of this question, both girls focused on their role as activists through how they call people to action, the actions they themselves present, and their reflections of their activist selves. Furthermore, the activism organizations play a large role in how the activists connected with their activism communities and many of the actions they performed as activists were through these organizations.

Role models, specifically peers and caring adults, were also found to be instrumental in the youth identifying their activism community, as they were able to share emotions and feelings about occurrences in current events and their personal lives and receive support from these individuals online. The expressions of emotion were yet another important way both young women were able to come to terms with their activism identity, specifically their feelings relating to their peers and their activism topic.

The third research question of how the youth activist identity is maintained, revised, and expanded, is seen in the disruption both activists faced. While Marley's disruptions often resulted in positive feedback and affirmation in her identity, Jamie faced more negative feedback. While Jamie experienced this negative feedback, she also received very positive feedback from famous celebrities and her role models. This may have affirmed her actions in constructing her identity.

Through this study several important previous literatures have been applied and in some cases, expanded. For example, La Sala, Skues, Wise, & Theilers (2014), Ward (2017), and Boyd (2008) were supported in the importance of social media in youth lives and how they use these technologies to build social networks and their identities. Additionally, Burke (2006), and Lawler, Thye, Yoon's (2015) argue for the importance of both Identity Control Theory and Social Exchange Theory. These theories were combined as seen in *Figure 3*.

This study was not without its limitations. Several limitations were identified in the methods of the study. The main limitations were the small sample size of both the number of cases and the number of tweets sampled. Furthermore, this study examined a very specific population of young, female, and justice focused activists.

In the future, I would like to further this study by looking at how youth use social media to develop their identity by creating a mixed methods study using both quantitative measures and interviewing youth on this process. Further, I would study the effect of a specifically negative peer response on social media.

Overall, this study and its findings led to several recommendations for parents, youth development practitioners, future researchers, and youth activist themselves. Among these recommendations is the importance of caring adult role models in youth lives and the importance of discussing safe internet use habits. Finally, one of the recommendations is to encourage youth to use these technologies in a safe but beneficial way as they can be used as a successful venue for youth to create and present their identities.

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