

**PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT ENGAGEMENT: FACILITATING
MOTIVATIONS AND BUILDING NETWORKED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

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ABSTRACT

The public relations literature has generally focused on functional organization-centered perspectives, applying theories to research how to manage the relationships between publics and organizations. As an alternative perspective, the co-creational perspective treats the organization and public as equal partners in the meaning-making process. This dissertation applied the co-creational approach to the social movement context and discussed how publics and social movement organizations co-create meanings, establish relationships, and contribute to society.

A mixed method design was applied to the dissertation. The whole network analysis examined the three movements from a holistic view. The in-depth interviews provided in-depth understandings of the meaning co-creation, motivations, and the outcomes of social movement engagement. The survey method was used to test the measures of three levels of social movement engagement measurements and the social movement engagement model. The ego network analysis was to examine the how interpersonal relationships were formed in a local social movement group.

The research found that for both Women's March (WM) and the Knox Blue Dots (KBD), the outcomes of social movement engagement included three aspects: facilitating personal development and expressing emotions at the individual level, finding a like-minded community at the community level, and creating changes at the national level. KBD's social movement engagement had an extra network level outcome: cultivating long-lasting relationships.

The whole network analysis results found that WM and BLM had loose online networks, while KBD had more closely connected networks. For the two national movements (WM and BLM), it appears difficult for social media users in each network to reach out to others than the local movement network (KBD).

The all movements' survey results indicated that two dimensions of societal engagement, relational engagement, and offline informational engagement positively influence the in-group bonding social capital. Relational engagement positively influences the two dimension of societal engagement. Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and the awareness dimension of societal engagement.

This dissertation suggests a path forward in conceptualizing, measuring, and applying engagement in social movements for public relations scholars and social movement communication practitioners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Topic and Problem	1
Purpose and Expected Outcomes	3
A Mixed Methods Approach	4
Summary.....	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Paradigms in Public Relations and the Co-creational Turn	9
The Functional Perspective.....	9
The Co Creational Approach	12
Activism	14
Functional and Co Creational Perspectives in Activism Research	15
Individual Activists as Meaning Cocreators.....	22
Engagement and Social Movement Engagement.....	25
Engagement.....	25
Social Movement Engagement	33
Motivations and Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement	39
Motivations for Engaging in Social Movements	39
Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement.....	42
Member Retention and Willingness of Future Social Movement Engagement.....	48
Focal Roles and Cooperation in the Networked Social Movements.....	50
Individual Activists' Ego-networks.....	50
Similarities in Ego Networks	53

The Whole-network of Social Movements	54
Research Questions Summary	57
Key Concept Summary	57
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	59
Why Mixed Methods?.....	59
In-depth Interview Data Collection and Analysis	61
Why In-depth Interviews?.....	61
Sampling Process and Research Participants of In-depth Interviews	62
Qualitative Data Analysis	64
Whole Network Data Collection and Analysis	65
Why Whole Network Analysis?.....	65
Data Collection	68
Ego Network Survey Data Collection and Analysis.....	73
Why Ego Network Analysis?.....	73
Sampling Process of the Ego Network Survey	76
Demographic Information of Ego Network Survey.....	77
Scale Validity	78
All Movements' Survey Data Collection and Survey Method	79
Sampling Process of the All Movements' Survey.....	80
Main Research Demographic Information.....	80
Measures	81
Summary of Mixed Research Methods.....	87
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	89

Qualitative Research Results	89
Meaning Co-creation during Social Movements	89
Motivations of Social Movement Engagement.....	96
Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement.....	105
The Whole-network Research Results	116
The Whole Network of Women’s March	116
The Whole-network of Black Lives Matter	117
The Whole-network of Knox Blue Dots	120
Ego Network Survey Results.....	124
Structural Holes Analysis.....	124
Overall Network Structural of Knox Blue Dots’	125
Members’ Similarities and Social Capital.....	125
All Movements’ Survey Results	127
Main Study.....	127
Testing the Hypothesized Social Movement Engagement Model	133
<i>Model Fit with SEM</i>	136
Social Capital and Relevant Exogenous Variables	136
Relational Engagement and Two Dimensions of Societal Engagement.....	137
Offline Informational Engagement and Relational Engagement.....	138
Online Informational Engagement and Endogenous Variables	139
Willingness in Future Engagement and Three Levels of Engagement.....	140
Social Movement Type and Willingness for Future Social Movements.....	142
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	144

Public Relations and Social Movement Engagement	144
Conceptual Contributions: Three Levels of Social Movement Engagement.....	144
Conceptual Contributions of the Higher-tier Societal Engagement	148
Conceptual Contributions of the Lower-tier Informational Engagement	151
Conceptual Contribution of the Networks of Social Movements: Stars and Villagers	160
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	164
Key Findings.....	164
Limitations.....	166
Future Research	168
Final Thoughts	168
LISTS OF REFERENCES.....	172
APPENDICES.....	208
Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide	209
Appendix B: All Movements' Survey	213
Appendix C: Ego-network Survey.....	220
VITA.....	241

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Engagement Authors, and their Conceptualization, Operationalization	223
Table 4.1. Qualitative Research Theme Summary.....	227
Table 4.2. Two Movements' Network Features	229
Table 4.3. Top In-degree Actors in Three Movements.....	230
Table 4.4. Top Retweeted Posts, Top Mentioned Accounts, and Top Replied-to Accounts in the Knox Blue Dots' Network	232
Table 4.5. Hypotheses Results	236
Table 4.6. Measurement Items, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Variables in the Hypothesized Model.	237

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1. Proposed Social Movement Engagement Model and Hypotheses	239
Figure 4.2. Social Movement Engagement Model	240

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Topic and Problem

Today, there are many issues facing the world. Wicked problems such as climate change, war and violence, uneven economic development, erosion of trust in democratic processes, attacks against media and other social issues are daunting (Willis, Tench, & Devins, 2018). These problems may seem too big or too complex for individual citizens to have any impact. Yet, when people join groups and work together they can affect social changes. How do citizens become co-creators of changes? They create and join social movements.

Social movements have been defined in various ways. Diani (1992) defined social movements as the “networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity” (p. 13). Diani’s definition emphasized that conflict is one cause of social movement formation. Social movements represent collective actions of social groups that share similar identities or interests. Collective behaviors are the way for individuals and groups to express their needs (Benford & Snow, 2010), embrace dissensus, disagreement, and diverse opinions (Ciszek, 2016), and facilitate policy formation, social change, and democracy (Holtzhausen, 2000; Saffer, Taylor & Yang, 2013; Sommerfeldt, 2013).

The occurrence and development of a social movement relies on the contribution of both organizations and individuals. In the past, social movements required *face-to-face* communication or *mediated communication* for movement mobilization and coordination. Face-to-face communication is crucial for social movements because that was how people met, shared ideas, and acted together (Snow, Zurcher, & Ekland-Olson, 1980). Today, with the rise of the Internet and social networks, additional mediated channels have been utilized for social

movements. Now, people from different locations can share common understandings of problems and co create and coordinate a shared vision of action. Technology allows them to work together on similar issues (Kent & Saffer, 2014) thus amplifying the impact of the social movement (Saffer et al., 2013). Technology allows for the process of ‘bridging’ that “connects actors to other actors that are not already connected. This connection changes the flow of information in a network and some organizations gain influence within the network” (Saffer et al., 2013, p. 6). Social media have a role to play in social movements because they create interactivity opportunities between organizations and publics (Saffer, Sommerfeldt, & Taylor, 2013).

Organizations can facilitate interactions with all kinds of publics using social media (Mundy, 2015) and publics can use social media to force organizations to change. Social media platforms, interpersonal networks, organization-public networks, and interorganizational networks make individuals and organizations connected in a complex way. The collective actions in social movements have shifted to a series of “connective actions” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013) based on the structure of networks. But it is not social media messaging that helps social movements accomplish their goals. There needs to be engagement at the interpersonal level, the organization-individual level, and the interorganizational level for social movements to accomplish their goals.

The term of engagement seems to be omnipresent in communication scholarship and has relevance for social movements. Engagement has been explored in public relations in various aspects, including social media engagement, civic engagement, dialogic engagement, CSR and engagement (Taylor & Kent, 2014). However, currently, in the public relations field, many scholars have equated *online interactivity* with *social media engagement*. For example, some scholars equate the two by using the frequencies of views, likes, comments, shares, and retweets

in social media as the measurement of engagement (e.g., Guidry, Jin, Orr, Messner, & Meganck, 2017; Men & Tsai, 2013, 2016; Tsai & Men, 2018). Others have argued that dialogic communication between organizations and publics can be achieved by social media (e.g., Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Romenti, Murtarelli & Valentini, 2014; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

In this study of public relations and social movements, at the conceptual level, engagement refers to an orientation that involves both cognitive and affective behaviors to include organizations, publics, and other groups as the partners of interaction and meaning co-creation process to achieve changes at the organizational, the community, the country, or the global level. Operationally, engagement is defined across three tiers: as *informational engagement* at the lower tier, *relational engagement* at the mid-level tier, and *societal engagement* at the highest tier. Each tier has the potential to create relationships that facilitate social capital in social movements.

Social media, as one of the mediated communication approaches, have been used for organization-public, interpersonal, and interorganizational communication. In social movements, social media have been used for generating problem recognition, resource mobilization, action alert, and much more. For social movements, social media play a much greater role beyond views, likes, comments, shares, and retweets. Public relations does not have clear conceptual and operational definitions and measurement of engagement in online and offline social movements contexts. This dissertation seeks to address this gap.

Purpose and Expected Outcomes

The purpose of the research is threefold. First, it seeks to expand engagement theory in public relations and in the context of social movements. Second, it will provide conceptualizations and operationalizations of social movement engagement. Lastly, it will

examine the occurrence of cooperation in the process of social movement engagement. In doing so, the dissertation connects social movements, network theory, and engagement to contribute to the theoretical development of engagement theory in public relations. In early social movement research, the majority of research focused on organization-oriented perspectives and considered how activist organizations push information to public through online platforms (e.g., Hon, 2016; Rodriguez, 2016). What we need now is to understand how social movement's meaning is co-created through interpersonal networks and the types of outcomes that comes from social movement engagement activities. To fill in the gap of social movement research in the public relations scholarship, the study of social movement engagement attempts to advance the knowledge of social movement engagement from three aspects. First, the dissertation applies a social network perspective to engagement to look at roles of interpersonal networks in facilitating social movement engagement at a micro level. Second, the study applies social media analytics to examine the informational social movement engagement of the whole networks in social media at a macro level. These data provide insights into how networks at the interpersonal level and whole network level contribute to social movement engagement. Third, it seeks to measure the various motivations and outcomes of social movement engagement that are co-created through interpersonal communication of social movement networks. The end goal provides a public relations perspective on social movement engagement.

A Mixed Methods Approach

This dissertation will require both qualitative data and quantitative data to achieve its desired outcomes. Mixed-methods research is considered as the third methodological movement (Denzin, 2010). Mixed methods design helps researchers achieve *triangulation* among research methods. In other words, combining different methods allows one research method to compensate

the weakness of the other and increase the validity of the study (Gray, 2009). Additionally, mixed methods design can expand the scope of a study and unpack new insights (Gray, 2009).

In this study, social network analysis (both quantitative and qualitative based), in-depth interviews, and surveys will be used to understand social movement engagement.

After a deep review of the relevant literature, the study started with an analysis of three social movements' (i.e., Women's March, Black Lives Matter, and Knox Blue Dots) social media analytics. Collective action in social movements is shaped by social ties between prospective participants (Diani & McAdam, 2003). Social network analysis (SNA) was used to analyze the social movement partners and relationships in the networks of social movements and how information flows among partners. SNA is an approach and a set of techniques to examine how individuals are connected in a network of social relations and interactions (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009). By examining the whole network structures of three social movements, I understood the network dynamics of three movements and identified key influencers in the three networks.

Then, in-depth interviews were applied by interviewing *key informants* who have actively participated in the three social movements. Interviews with individuals who have participated in social movements allow me to understand how social actors' worldviews and knowledge have been shaped as socially situated individuals (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Using the interview method adds more depth to the study and allows the researcher to understand how the participants in the social movement network co create meaning, motivated to engage in the practices of social movements, and allows the research to identify the roles of individual activists in the social movement.

The survey research method was employed to test the operationalization of three levels of social movement engagement and test the proposed social movement engagement model. Lastly, Knox Blue Dots' ego network was examined. The ego network analysis applies the name generator technique to create a participant-aided network diagram (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007). In this network diagram, the researcher asked the key informants to provide names with whom they interacted with in Knox Blue Dots' activities. Networked relationships are formed based on individuals' similarities, social relations, interactions, and information flows (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). Applying the ego network analysis helps the researcher to examine how member similarities facilitate social movement engagement that may ultimately influence the production of social capital.

Overall, with mixed method design, the research added knowledge to understand the meaning co-creation of three social movements, the motivations, outcomes of social movement engagement, network structures of three social movements, and how engagement works in social movements.

Summary

The dissertation contributes to the field of public relations by furthering social movement, activism, and social capital research. Theoretically, this research contributes to the conceptualization of engagement and the application of the network ecology approach (Yang & Taylor, 2015) in social movement contexts. This study examines social movement networks as communities that are comprised of various actors who co-create meanings and facilitate participation in social change.

Methodologically, the dissertation contributes to the field of public relations in furthering in operationalizing and measuring outcomes of social movement engagement. It seeks to develop

a more robust measurement of social capital created by public relations communication during social change.

In practice, this research provides insight into public relations practitioners regarding how to improve communication in social movement engagement in the backdrop of digital media and interpersonal communication. The dissertation illustrated a roadmap of how to mobilize resources for social movements in networked environments.

To clarify the importance of engagement in social movements in creating social capital, a literature review in chapter two will explain the theoretical connections among activism, social movements, and engagement. Social capital, one of the outcomes of social movement engagement, contributes to the establishment of civil society, and may provide a useful lens to understand the outcomes of social movement engagement. Chapter three provides a detailed explanation of the mixed methods approach. Chapter four presents the results of the mixed methods research, followed by a discussion in Chapter five of the implications of the findings on theory, method, and public relations practice. The last section, Chapter six, will provide conclusions about the research, discussion limitations and identify future directions in research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Individuals and groups have identified *unfavorable wicked problems* that impede the development of their countries, regions, or the world. They have also identified the existence of problems of *unfairness and inequity between groups as major areas for change*. The unfavorable wicked problems at the societal level include issues that relate to human rights, anti-colonialism, anti-nuclear movement, environmental issues, and many others. Some individuals and activist groups have fought to solve wicked problems and general unfairness and inequity between groups. Therefore, some movements have been initiated to eliminate gender discrimination (e.g., #MeToo), racial discrimination (e.g., #BlackLivesMatter), LGBTQ rights (e.g., #MarriageEquality), and many others social movements have engaged in collective action to challenge the unequal powers and rights across some social groups in the society.

Collective actions refer to “individuals and organizations rationally contribute to public goods which they could not create alone and which are accessible to publics” (Shumate & Dewitt, 2008, p. 408). Collective action can occur in both offline and online contexts. Online and offline participation of publics amplifies the social influence of social movements. However, mobilizing groups of individuals is not easy and just because some people share common interests cannot ensure individuals’ participation in collective actions. Mancur Olson (1965) in *The Logic of Collective Action* challenged that we cannot assume that the groups of people who share common interests would take some actions collectively to fulfill group objectives, if we take individuals’ rational decision-making and self-interested behaviors into consideration. Olson (1965) further argued that “unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals* will not act to achieve their common or group interests” (p.

2). This argument was evolved to be known as the zero contribution thesis, which means rational agents in a group may not be likely to contribute or to cooperate to create public goods (Ostrom, 2000). Although a lot of barriers have hindered individuals from engaging in collective actions, various types of social movements still have thrived. This dissertation will explore how individual activists form interpersonal networks in online and offline contexts to fulfil activism goals. It seeks to answer why did people participate in social movements despite their rational and self-interested priorities, and I hope to identify and measure which outcomes emerge from public relations fostered social movement engagement.

Therefore, to better understand the role of engagement in social movements, it is important to understand how public relations has evolved as a field of practice and scholarship. This chapter will first review the paradigms in public relations and the co-creational turn in the public relations scholarship. Then the chapter will further discuss the literature in activism and social movements. Finally, the engagement literature will be addressed.

Paradigms in Public Relations and the Co-creational Turn

From the late 1930s to the early 2000s, public relations scholarship was dominated by a functional perspective. The functional perspective highlights efficiency and rationality in relationship management from the organization's view. The scholars who enacted the functional perspective believed that business-oriented communication tools, such as marketing and advertising, helped achieve organizational goals (Botan & Taylor, 2004).

The Functional Perspective

The functional perspective “sees publics and communication as tools or means to achieve organizational ends” (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 651). Early public relations scholars believed that publicity, media relations management, and business consultation were seen as the main tasks for

public relations practitioners (Harlow, 1977; Skinner & Shanklin, 1978). Theories of persuasion, agenda setting, and the research of information subsidies from public relations to media contributed to the functional perspective.

In terms of persuasion, public relations practitioners have been seen as “persuaders” (Hutton, 1999) and attempt to use communicative tools to influence publics’ beliefs, and even change publics’ behaviors. Grunig (1992) argued that applying persuasive messages in communication process is an unethical and manipulative action. Such communication is seen as a one-way asymmetrical communication way pushing information from organizations to publics, which should be abandoned as a public relations tactic. However, the other groups of public relations scholars believed that persuasion is derived from rhetoric and is seen as a natural part of human beings’ behaviors (Porter, 2010; Taylor, Kent, & Saffer, 2013). According to Heath, “rhetoric is the essence of public relations” (1993, p. 142). Burke also argued that “wherever there is persuasion there is rhetoric, wherever there is meaning there is persuasion” (p. 172). Hence, rhetoric is not inherently unethical (Porter, 2010). Persuasive techniques have been used in all types of communicative situations: face-to-face, phone call, print media, broadcast, and many more (Kent, 2011). Today, public relations scholarship still has debates in terms of whether persuasion is good or bad, but many acknowledge, “it is the intent behind a message strategy that makes it ethical or unethical” (Taylor et al., 2013, p. 137). Persuasive techniques are not unethical if the tactics follow ethical rules. Communication practitioners use persuasive messages as a way to influence publics’ perceptions and behaviors. In addition to persuasion, agenda setting is the other way for communication practitioners to influence media exposure and publics’ perception.

The other example of the functional perspective is the agenda setting theory studied by many early public relations scholars. Agenda setting theory helps public relations scholars understand the one of the public relations practitioners' tasks — maintaining media relations. McCombs and Shaw (1972) believed that selective emphasis given by the media influenced the public agenda on *what* to think about and *how* to think about it.

Information subsidy is intrinsically related to agenda setting theory and it refers to the process of providing information about an event and help an organization to increase its exposure in media coverage (Gandy, 1980). Paid advertisement, supporting the expense of news gathering, news releases, news conferences, and many other forms of public relations are considered as information subsidies (Gandy, 1980; Turk & Franklin, 1987). Information subsidies have a close relationship with agenda-building (Berkowitz & Adams, 1990; Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997; Curtin, 1999; Zoch & Molleda, 2006), which refers to “the sources’ interactions with gatekeepers, a give-and-take process in which sources seek to get their information published and the press seeks to get that information from independent sources” (Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison, 1995, p. 90). In other words, agenda building answers who sets the media agenda (Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu & Seltzer, 2006). Public relations practitioners and activities help organizations create media agendas. Journalists and public relations have an interdependent relationship on news content. “Journalists depend on public relations practitioners for news material, and practitioners depend on editors for publicity” (Pincus, Rimmer, Rayfield, & Cropp, 1993, p. 29). Public relations practitioners are seen as a mediator and boundary spanners between clients and media to get more media exposure about the clients (Wyatt, Smith, & Andsager, 1996). As boundary spanners, public relations professionals have used both proactive and reactive information subsidies to

influence media exposure and further influence publics' perceived importance of the issue (Turk, 1985).

Organization's information subsidies and agenda-building have impacts on news content. In the late 1980s, Berkowitz and Adams (1990) found that decision makers of the local televisions used 22% of the organizational news releases. Boumans (2017) analyzed the organizational press releases from 2004–2013 and found overall 10 percent of the newspaper reports were generated from organizational press releases. Information subsidies and agenda-building take effect in the areas of corporations' image management and media management (Kiousis, Kim, McDevitt, & Ostrowski, 2009). Many empirical research has supported that the salience of issue in news releases further influenced public opinions (Kiousis et al., 2006; Kiousis et al., 2009).

In sum, the persuasion theory, agenda setting theory, and the research on information subsidies have emphasized the importance of achieving organizational goals through communication practices and maintaining media relations. Under the functional approach, the main public relations task was to achieve organizational goals with various tactics. Public relations practitioners design persuasive messages for organizations, manage organization-media relationship, provide information subsidies to influence the media coverage of the organization, and further help organizations manage crisis (e.g., Coombs & Holladay, 2006), risks (e.g., Palenchar & Heath, 2007), and issues (e.g., Berkowitz & Turnmire, 1994).

The Co Creational Approach

Over time, as public relations grew into a more mature field, scholars began to focus on the organization-public relationships (OPR) (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). The OPR perspective brought valuable conceptual change to

public relations scholarship by placing the “relationship” in a crucial role in the study of public relations and stating that organization and its key publics should receive mutual benefits (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998).

OPRs is “the degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree on one has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another” (Huang, 2001, p. 65). OPR includes four dimensions — trust, control mutuality, relationship commitment, and relationship satisfaction (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). OPR redefined the practices in public relations by putting the emphasis on relationship building rather than the manipulation of public opinion (Heath, 2013). Through the application of OPR, public relations researchers found another way to measure the outcomes of organizational effectiveness in general (Coombs & Holladay, 2015).

Pearson (1989) argued that “public relations is best conceptualized as the management of interpersonal dialectic” (p. 177). OPR was the initial step to a more relational approach to public relations. To address the weaknesses of the functional perspective and to reflect a more rhetoric-centered approach to relationships, a co-creational turn occurred in public relations scholarship in the early 2000s. From the co-creational perspective, publics are seen “as co-creators of meaning and communication as what makes it possible to agree to shared meanings, interpretations, and goals” (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652). Instead of using manipulative and monologic communication to maintain the organization-public relationship, co-creational scholars viewed publics and organizations as equals in meaning co-creation, and aim at achieving a long-term relationship (Botan & Hazleton, 2006; Botan & Taylor, 2004).

Additionally, scholars following a co-creational approach wrote about other types of relationships than those occurring between and organization and a public. Groups other than

businesses were now being studied as creators of public relations messages and co-creators of meaning. One big change in the co-creational approach was in the scope and nature of relationships. The co-creational turn called on scholars and practitioners to use communication to support or build networks of relationships. One-to-one dyadic relationships were just one kind of public relations fostered relationship. Organizations had responsibilities to their community and society and public relations helped organizations to anticipate and change to meet societal expectations. “Organizations have a role to play in their community and that organizational interests are best served when community interests are served” (Taylor, 2011, p. 438). From this perspective, public relations adds value to society through facilitating mutually beneficial relationships and creating social capital to the communities where activities occur.

The co-creation turn is consistent with Theunissen’s (2014) view that meaning goes through a continuous evolving and negotiating process. Adopting the co-creational view emphasizes that the creation of authentic meaning and voices needs giving up some control over the process of meaning creation (Theunissen, 2014). In doing so, the co-creational perspective is seen as a more ethical approach to activism which considers organizations, publics and other partners as equals and collaborators in the process of activism.

Under a co-creational approach, new types of organizations and relationships could be studied and theorized. Activism was one of the areas that opened up for serious study under a co-creational approach. In the next section, the activism literature will be discussed.

Activism

The co-creational turn in public relations has an impact on activism studies by emphasizing the relational give-and-take between organizations, publics and groups (Saffer, 2018). Before the application of co-creational perspective in activism, the research agenda in

activism reflected the organization-centric perspective. Most scholars overlooked activist publics as a group that is different from other stakeholders in activism (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000).

“Activism is the process by which special interest groups of people exert pressure on corporations or other institutions to change policies, practices, or conditions that the activists find problematic” (Smith, 2005, p. 5). Smith’s definition indicated that activism is a collective behavior of a group of people who share the same interests. The goals of the collective behavior include pressuring organizations or institutions to make changes to problematic situations. Activism begins when members of the public are aware of the problematic situation in society and want to challenge what they believe to be an unfair or a wicked problem.

Functional and Co Creational Perspectives in Activism Research

Activism studies in public relations can be classified into three main types: functional, critical, and rhetorical/co-creational perspectives.

In the initial stage of public relations development, from the excellence theory perspective, research on activism regarded activists as a segment of publics who created issues, pressure, and troubles for organizations (Anderson, 1992; Grunig, 1979, 1989). Early researchers wanted to know why people became activists. Grunig’s situational theory of publics explains why some publics have higher involvement in activism than others. J. E. Grunig (1979, 1989) considered activists as groups who create problems for public relations executives and generate conflicts between organizations and their external environments. From his perspective, individuals’ information seeking behavior is the connection between activism and public relations. Three main independent variables information seeking behaviors, including problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement influenced how and if a person became an activist (J. E. Grunig, 1989). Based on the three independent variables, publics can be

further divided into a typology of single-issue public, apathetic public, all-issue public, and hot-issue public (J. E. Grunig, 1979, 1989). Organizations perceived activist groups as the threats who were regarded as “trouble” for the organization’s objectives. From a functionalist perspective, organizations needed to manage the relationship with publics and minimize the negative influence generated by activism.

Grunig’s perception of activists had implications for public relations communication to activists. Grunig argued that public relations specialists should design communication strategies for each public group that cares about specific issues (J. E. Grunig, 1979). In doing so, public relations practitioners should design communication strategies and proactive media relations to help organizations respond to “activist pressure” (L.A. Grunig, 1989, p. 83). From this perspective, organization-public relationship *management* was the goal. In sum, under the functional approach to activism, activist groups and individuals were seen as external publics that pressured organizations. The tasks for public relations practitioners were to design diverse messages to react to different types of publics when crises, risks, and issues occurred. Indeed, moving activists to aware publics before they influenced the organization was often seen as a public relations success.

Over time, public relations scholars recognized that the functional approach to activism was problematic. More critical approaches appeared in the literature. The critical perspective reflects an interdisciplinary approach that questions the taken-for-granted values and assumptions currently held in the dominant scholarship and challenges conventional social, economic, and political structures that have triggered social problems (Gray, 2013; L’Etang, 2005). In public relations scholarship, the critical tradition was seen as “fringe public relations” (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 880), but today it is seen as challenging the well-known and

accepted ideas, assumptions, and dominant paradigms in public relations theories and criticizing public relations practices and relevant policies (L'Etang, 2005). As Motion and Weaver (2005) explained,

The task for the critical public relations scholar is to investigate how public relations practice uses particular discursive strategies to advance the hegemonic power of particular groups and to examine how these groups attempt to gain public consent to pursue their organizational mission. (p. 50)

To fulfill this mission, critical public relations scholars are concerned with the issues of hegemonic power of organizations or other powerful entities in the relationship and the diverse needs of marginalized groups. At the conceptual level, critical public relations scholars care about *who* uses the public relations communicative tools to express their viewpoints, *what is being communicated*, *why* do they conduct the communicative actions, and *which institutions* do they represent or speak for (Motion & Weaver, 2005). Methodologically, the critical tradition also has been developed as a series of strong methodologies, such as critical discourse analysis and the ethnographic method.

Public relations scholars have conducted activism research through the critical perspective. Critical activism studies have explored how activist groups empower themselves and disempower the groups they fight against through social media (Ciszek, 2014, 2016, 2017a; Ciszek & Logan, 2018), how LGBT organizations attracted the attention of media agencies and publics regarding the LGBT relevant issues (Cabosky, 2014), why identities of LGBT groups matter for their communicative behaviors (Ciszek, 2017a), and how the marginalized groups have spoken for themselves. When individuals identify themselves as a part of a social group, specific social identities, such as LGBT identity, create belongingness, membership, and values

for them (Ciszek, 2017b). The critical approach to activism informs this dissertation because at the micro level, social identities of specific groups influence group members' participation in social movements. At the macro level, social structures, political system, the dominant ideology, and socio-economic system shape also activism (Ciszek, 2017b).

Another approach to activism is the co-creational approach. As Uysal and Yang (2013) argued “public relations scholars need to re-conceptualize the role of activists and avoid the managerial bias” (p. 468). The functional approach to activism places the activists and public in a subordinate position. Activists are seen as obstacles and trouble for corporations (Grunig, 1979, 1989). In contrast, from a co-creational perspective, we can study and learn the values of the activists in the social movement. The co-creational approach challenges past activism research. Through communication, meaning co-creation can be achieved (de Beer, 2014). According to Roser, DeFillippi, and Samson (2013), co-creation is seen as “an interactive, creative and social process between stakeholders that is initiated by the firm at different stages of the value creation process” (p. 22). In activism, members of the public can become “active contributors, co-creators, information sharers, and advocates” (Dhanesh, 2017, p. 928). Therefore, the co-creational approach provides a conceptual shift—members of the public have a more proactive role in activism, rather than be passive receivers of activism relevant information.

The functional approach and the co-creational approach to activism have differences in the following aspects:

First, *the creators* of the meanings are different. In the functional approach to activism, corporations and non-profit organizations are the main focuses of studies. Dodd and Supa (2014, 2015) used the term *corporate social advocacy* to describe the corporations' engagement in controversial social-political topics (e.g., gun control, same-sex marriage) that are unrelated to

the corporations. For corporations, they participate in activism and make statements about various social-political issues. For non-profit organizations studies in activism, scholars primarily focus on how activist organizations used messages and message frames in communication in various channels (Rodriguez, 2016; Zoch, Collins, Sisco, & Supa, 2008) and how activist organizations applied tactics and strategies (Derville, 2005). For a long time, public relations scholars have believed that organizations—both corporations and non-profit organizations—have served as the creators of meanings in activism. In activism studies in public relations, scholars have ignored the publics' voices and actions. With the emergence of digital media, individuals have easier access to co-create meanings in activism. The co-creational approach values the cooperative process between various types of organizations and individual activists.

Second, the *motivation of engaging* in social movements is different in the functional and co-creational approach. From the functional perspective, when corporations participate in activism, they are often profit-driven or seek to enhance their reputation or financial standing. As Dodd and Supa (2014, 2015) claimed, engaging in corporate social advocacy helps corporations establish positive public stances, increase in purchase intention, and create positive financial outcomes. For non-profit organizations, the main purposes of engagement in the social movements include maintaining the operation of the organization, promoting the advocated causes, and securing continuous resources. Doan and Toledano (2018) observed that publics contribute to activism because of relevant interests and resources. Yet, the scholarship of activism regarding the publics' motivations of engaging is underdeveloped for the inquiry of publics' motivation to engage in the collective actions and what can publics get out from

collective actions (outcomes of engagement). The gap in the current literature will be examined by using the in-depth interview method in the dissertation.

Third, the functional and co-creational perspectives have different approaches to *resource mobilization* and *information dissemination* for social movements. Resource mobilization in social movements refers to the aggregation of resources, including money, space, human resources, websites, and many other resources for collective actions' purpose (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Sommerfeldt, 2011; Taylor & Sen Das, 2010). Information dissemination in social movements refers to the process of transmitting social movement relevant information online and offline (Luarn, Yang & Chiu, 2014). In the functional perspective scholars examine how corporations and non-profit organizations use various communication channels and how messages were transmitted. Corporations and non-profit organizations use both self-owned channels (e.g., official websites, direct mails, emails, social media accounts) and mass communication channels to collect resources for social movements. However, the self-owned channels of corporations and non-profit organizations are often monologic and passive communication (Sommerfeldt, Kent, & Taylor, 2012). The mass communication channels are also influenced by the information subsidies from corporations and non-profit organizations. As Yang and Taylor (2010) indicated, to achieve more media exposure, NGOs must work harder to provide press releases and other tactics to attract public attention on their issues to gain legitimacy. Therefore, the self-owned channels of corporations and non-profit organizations and the news reports from the mass communication channels do not fulfill the promises of dialogic communication and engagement. By focusing on analyzing the meaning making activities of information frame, tactics of organizations, and the information dissemination process we can

further understand how to facilitate social movement engagement between organizations and publics.

From the co-creational perspective, publics are essential to meaning co-creation. Scholars in activism recognize the values of publics in the resource mobilization and information dissemination process. For individual activists, personal social ties, interpersonal networks, and online networks are the primary resources for people to advocate change and motivate more participants for collective actions (Bunnage, 2014). As Diani (1997) argued, “networks as a product as well as a precondition of action” thereby expanding the range of possible movement outcomes” (p. 143). Some studies have claimed that the characteristics of the relationships, including kinship, friendship, diverse occupational ties, or other social ties, are the main preconditions to make an individual influential in the interpersonal network (Erickson, 1996; Tindall, Cormier, & Diani, 2012). Kwon, Stefanone, and Barnett (2014) indicated that whether individuals who generate powerfully personal social influences on others online should consider the extent of their *interpersonal visibility* and *interpersonal salience*. Interpersonal visibility refers to the focal actors’ opinions and behaviors should be visible and public available for a wide range of people, while interpersonal salience refers to for the people that are being influenced, focal actors’ opinions and behaviors should be interesting, prominent, and relevant (Kwon et al., 2014). In public relations, many studies have explored how corporations and non-profit organizations mobilize resources, while studies focusing on how individual activists mobilize resources for social movements are rare. Based on the gap of the literature, in the dissertation, with an example of Knox Blue Dots, the researcher will explore how individual activists mobilize resources for social movements based on group members’ similarities and interpersonal networks.

Fourth, the *roles* of organizations and publics in social movements are different in the functional and co-creational perspectives. From the functional perspective, non-profit organizations usually serve as the pioneers to initiate a new program or actions for the advocated causes, while corporations engage in social movements as participants to support favored socio-political issues. From the co-creational perspective to activism research, individual activists also play crucial roles in facilitating social changes. Individual activists self-organize to exert social influence for advocated issues. However, how individual activists' focal roles (e.g., organizing collective actions, at the center of information flow) are formed in the process of organizing collective actions is still underdeveloped in the public relations literature. In this dissertation, based on the structural hole theory and resource dependency theory, how some individual activists achieve focal positions in the social movement network will be examined.

In sum, four main aspects of the literature will be discussed in the dissertation: (1) individual activists as meaning co-creators, (2) engagement and social movement engagement, (3) the motivations for engaging in social movement engagement and outcomes of social movement engagement, and (4) the formation of focal roles in the networked social movements. In the next section, how individuals become meaning co-creators will be discussed.

Individual Activists as Meaning Cocreators

The concept of meaning refers to “the body of symbols, attitudes, values, schemata, logics, and scripts...that can be located at the subjective level, in actors' heads, or at the social level in communication process or attached to social structures (like relationships, groups or organizations)” (Fuhse & Mützel, 2011, p. 1068). Meaning is subjective. It depends on social structures where individuals reside. Sociologists and rhetoricians have explained meaning creation in two ways.

In sociology, the tradition of studying meaning can be traced back to Max Weber's theorizing of social actions through the interpretivism — individuals attach personal interpretation, judgments, and values to their social actions. *Causality* and *meanings* are generated when individuals are involved in social actions such as engaging in social movements. According to Weber (1972/1922), what happens in social action outcomes depends on members' intentions and interests. Following the thoughts of Weber, social actions, such as collective actions, consist of the value-rational motivations of a group of individuals and networks. Fuhse and Mützel (2011) argued that “networks can ‘explain’ individual action, but only with a complementary understanding of the subjective meaning tied to networks” (p. 1069). In other words, sociologists have explained individuals' social actions as personal interpretations and an outcome of networks and social relations. A group of individuals may provide shared meaning because of their networked relationships. Sociologists inform us that in the context of social movements, individuals' behaviors (e.g., engaging in collective actions) or personal meaning creation can be the outcomes of social relations and interactions of groups members. Additionally, rhetoricians also provide some insights into meaning creation.

Burke (1966) used the concept of terministic screens to describe the meaning creation in the world. He argued that terministic screens allow individuals to interpret and understand the reality in a reconstructive way and further reflect their interpretation of reality on their corresponding behaviors. Robert Heath was inspired by Burke's (1966) concept of terministic screens and discussed the implication of rhetoric in public relations. Heath (1993) suggested that people cannot perceive the world without being influenced by terministic screens. Therefore, individuals in social actions can express more than one meaning from their different interpretations of reality. Heath (1993) believed that meaning is crucial for public relations

scholarship and practices. During the communication process, publics and organization express and create meanings through “rhetorical discourse and symbolic action” (Taylor, 2010, p. 7). When publics are involved in enlightened decisions in society, it is the beginning of civil society (Taylor, 2010). If we expect the publics to be involved in the decision-making process of enlightened choices, it is essential to make them feel free to express their interpretation of the meanings. Saffer (2016) studied how shared meanings could be created in a networked environment, where publics and organizations were connected with various types of social relations. He further indicated that “social capital can emerge when network members see others as trusting, cooperative, important and useful for exchanging information” (p. 173). In this study, I want to understand how meanings were co-created by individual activists who were connected in a social movement network.

The qualitative approach to social network research aims to understand the meanings that are created by a group of people in the social network structures. Many social anthropologists (e.g., Barnes, 1954; Mayer & Mayer, 1961; Small, 2017; Spillius, 1957) have applied the qualitative approach to describe the structures of different types of networks. Social anthropologists were interested in the networks of meaning-making in which “each person sees himself at the center of a collection of friends” (Barnes, 1954, p. 44). In other words, in the context of social movements, each individual activist sees himself/herself as the focal person of a collection of social relations prompting the first research question in the dissertation:

RQ1: How do individual activists serve as co-creators of meanings in online and offline contexts?

RQ1 explores how individual activists serve as co-creators of meanings in online and offline contexts such as face to face communication or through social media. More specifically, the researcher seeks to understand the subjective meanings that are attached to the social

movement networks. For RQ1, the emphasis of the research is at the level of meaning. Through the qualitative approach, open-ended questions will be used to how individuals in three social movements co-create meanings, motivated for social movement engagement, and what outcomes did they achieve by engaging in social movements.

In addition to the meaning co creation, I want to understand activists' motivations and the outcomes of social movement engagement as they are also underdeveloped in the public relations literature. In the next section, the concept of engagement, social movement engagement, and the motivations and outcomes of social movement engagement will be discussed.

Engagement and Social Movement Engagement

The concept of engagement seems to be omnipresence and has been used in everyday life and across different fields of research. In this section, the concept of engagement and social movement engagement will be conceptualized. Additionally, some misunderstandings of engagement, the motivations, and outcomes of individuals' social movement engagement will be addressed.

Engagement

The concept of engagement has been used widely in communication studies. Scholars have studied engagement from different perspectives, such as social media engagement, employee engagement, civic engagement, dialogic engagement, community engagement, and many other types (Taylor & Kent, 2014). To demonstrate the various definition of engagement, Table 2.1 shows different conceptualizations and operationalization of the concept of engagement.

Engagement can be roughly divided into two types based on where the engagement occurs: offline (face to face) engagement and digital engagement.

Interpersonal interactions are seen as long-lasting and productive offline engagement when real relationships, trust, dialogue, and cooperation are established in the process. From a co-creational perspective, interpersonal interaction resides at the center of dialogic relationship. “It is the presence of an interpersonal relationship (although not necessarily face-to-face) between participants that facilitates dialogue” (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 28). In the context of social movements, the offline social movement engagement has existed for a long time before the widely use of digital social movement when people have participated in some activities offline in interpersonal occasions, such as demonstrations, sit-ins, protests, etc. Interpersonal interactions are required for offline engagement. Sometimes offline engagement can include online engagement.

Digital engagement, or online engagement, has become a primary focus of engagement study in social media studies of public relations. An increasing number of research articles has examined the public-organization engagement in the social media context (e.g., Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Men & Tsai, 2013; Tsai & Men, 2013). A dominant way to conceptualize digital or social media engagement is to consider it as a way for maintaining and developing organization-public relationships by creating interactions in social media or exchanging information in digital platforms (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Digital engagement is seen as a way to boost organizational social media presence and influence (Yang & Saffer, 2018). In the social movement context, social movements in the internet age have enacted tactics, such as hashtag activism, online fundraising, and online advocacy. However, in the current literature of digital engagement, many scholars have not differentiated between digital engagement and digital interaction. The following section will discuss the misconception of digital engagement. In the

extant literature, misunderstandings and misconceptions have existed in public relations literature in terms of the concept of engagement. As Paek et al. (2013) claimed:

Many studies of engagement neglect to define what it actually is. Either they conceive it as frequent use of a media platform (e.g., website, blog, social networking service), or they focus on the consequences of engagement rather than the nature of the phenomenon itself. (p. 527)

Many scholars have treated online interactivity and communicative behaviors as the behavior of engagement in two ways: (1) the concept of digital engagement is the synonym for online interactivity and (2) public engagement is seen as synonym for communicative actions of publics.

First, a primary misunderstanding in studying engagement is equating online interactivity to engagement. For public relations practitioners, it is necessary to distinguish the differences among interactivity, responsiveness, and dialogue (Ott & Theunissen, 2015). Interactions between an organization and public in social media are considered social media engagement (Jiang, Luo, & Kulemeka, 2016; Men & Tsai, 2016). Research in public relations has operationalized public engagement in social media as the frequencies of views, likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc. (e.g., Guidry, Jin, Orr, Messner, & Meganck, 2017; Men & Tsai, 2013, 2016; Tsai & Men, 2018). However, “social media usage and engagement are not synonymous” (Smith, Stumberger, Guild, & Dugan, 2017, p. 979). Using social media to communicate with publics does not necessary lead to the outcomes of engagement. Avidar (2018) believed that interactivity is a process of information transmission and exchange between an organization and its public, which is mainly a cognitive process. But, engagement needs far more beyond cognitive process of information exchange, engagement also requires affective component (Avidar, 2018). More specifically, engagement requires both a cognitive and emotional

connection with the content in media (Smith et al., 2017). Engagement is “a process, a state of mind, or an orientation” (Avidar, 2018, p. 507). During the process of engagement, the organization and the public should be willing to “willing to give their whole selves” (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26). As Avidar (2018) summarized, the differences between interactivity and engagement exist in the following aspects: interactivity is basically a message exchange and information transmission process between two parties. Engagement is considered as a state of mind involving emotional feelings and cognitive information processing which aims at relational give-and-take process and mutual understanding between two parties.

Second, the other misconception is to conceptualize public engagement as the communicative actions of publics. Men and Tsai conceptualized public engagement on social media based on the levels of activeness on social media ranging from message consumption (e.g., view pictures on organization’s social media page) to message contribution (e.g., share an organization’s relevant information) (e.g., Men & Tsai, 2013, 2014, 2016; Tsai & Men, 2013, 2018). Overall, Men and Tsai’s conceptualization of public engagement on social media focused on information consumption and transmission, which internally measured *communicative actions of publics* and how publics obtain and share organization relevant information. Engaging in information consumption and transmission is communicative engagement. It is a part of engagement, but these actions cannot represent the complete concept of engagement. Additionally, the communicative actions of publics can be applied in offline occasions when individuals want to seek more information. Six sub-variables are included in offline communication actions, including information forefending and information permitting (both of these two sub-variables are labeled as *information selection*), information forwarding, information sharing (both of these two sub-variables are labeled as *information transmission*),

information seeking and information attending (both of these two sub-variables are labeled as *information acquisition*) (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010). In the context of social movement engagement, the *offline information forefending* refers to individuals judging the value and relevance of social movement relevant information offline and ignoring some information that is irrelevant and useless for social movement engagement. *Offline information permitting* refers to individuals' passive acceptance of the relevance of social movement relevant information. *Offline information forwarding* refers to individuals' proactive information behavior by forwarding the social movement relevant information to other individuals. *Offline information sharing* is a reactive behavior to share the social movement relevant information with others upon request. *Offline information seeking* is a proactive action to seek for messages that are relevant to social movements. Offline information attending is an unplanned discovery of social movement relevant messages (Kim et al., 2010). In Kim et al.'s research context, they seek to explain individuals' communicative actions when they encounter problematic life situations. The research context of wicked problems is suitable for the dissertation topic — collective actions in social movement solve problems (e.g., injustice, unfairness) in society. When comparing the two conceptualizations of the different research teams — Men and Tsai and Kim, Grunig, and colleagues, it is clear that the two measurements overlap.

However, the conceptualizations of interactivity and communicative actions of publics cannot totally reflect all the features of engagement. Engagement is “an affective state” (Smith et al., 2017, p. 979), “affective motivator,” and “affective commitment” (Kang, 2014, pp. 401–402). The affective and emotional component of engagement results from the relationship establishment at the interpersonal level or at the organization-public relationship level by creating “a psychological link” (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 252) or “a psychological bond”

(Gruen, Summers, & Acito, 2000, p. 37). It is a give-and-take process occurring when the organization has the willingness to “inform and raise awareness, seek involvement, opinions and provide feedback, and create real partnerships through shared community problem solving” (Johnston, 2010, p. 3). For individual activists, engagement means more than the retweet, comment, like, and emotional reactions. Engagement is an emotional attachment, commitment, and loyalty to an event (e.g., collective action), a social group with members who share similar interests or identities, and the shared goal. Therefore, in the dissertation, both cognitive and affective behaviors and the values of various entities in the process of meaning co-creation are emphasized as the essentials of *real engagement*.

Social media interactions between organizations and publics are essential public relations tactics for organizations and can be included as one part of public engagement. But these interactions cannot represent the whole meaning of engagement. Real engagement contains both online and offline interpersonal communication between organizations and publics with the desire and efforts to establish long-term relationships. The one-time interactions and the so-called marketing tactic of “fake engagement” should not be viewed as meaningful engagement. Real engagement requires a genuine, authentic, enduring, and ongoing meaning co-creational process among organizations, publics, government, media, and other entities in the society.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, in this study, engagement refers to an orientation that involves both cognitive and affective behaviors to include organizations, publics, and other groups as the partners of interaction and meaning co-creation process to achieve changes at the organizational, the community, the country, or the global level.

Kang (2014) claimed that engagement is “a behavioral motivator that elicits individual publics’ supportive behaviors toward an organization” (p. 399). Kang’s statement identified the

behavioral component of engagement in the context of the organization-public relationship. At the *organizational level*, when organizations make decisions about organizations' products, services, management, and long-term mission, publics should be involved as part of decision making. For example, when organizations change users' privacy policies, publics should be invited, as the meaning co-creators, to audit and monitor the changes. Kang's (2014) statement of public's behavioral engagement ignored that individuals can not only take actions in organization-public engagement but engage in activities at the community or higher level. At the *community level*, the organization's decision making should be beneficial for the community in which the organization operates and serves. Johnston (2010) believed that representatives should be invited to communities' decision making and consultation. More importantly, organizations should take social responsibilities to make their community a better place to live (Kent & Taylor, 2016). At the *national level*, corporations, non-profit organizations, and publics are also the meaning co-creators of socio-political issues. Through participating in corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014, 2015), corporations can also become the entities that facilitate social changes. For social movement organizations and non-profit organizations, they also need the engagement of publics to make the social changes happen (Yang & Taylor, 2010). At the *global level*, engagement is seen as multiple dynamic cooperative engagements operating at different levels across the world. For example, the recent #MeToo movement was initiated from the U.S. and extended to South American, Europe, Asia, and Australia. It is a global engagement that makes efforts to make social change, specifically women's rights, possible.

Johnston (2010) analyzed the concept of *community engagement* and summarized the typology of community engagement — community information, community consultation, community participation, and pseudo engagement. Community information is one-way message

dissemination to convey information to community members. Community consultation is a process to consult community members' opinions in regard to specific issues. Community participation suggests community members take an active role in planning tasks.

Pseudo engagement is insincere community participation or consultation. Johnston's (2010) conceptualization of community engagement indicates that engagement has different degrees. It may be present at a lower degree as information transmission and information consumption, as a medium degree when relationships are established and individuals' thoughts are being respected, and in a higher degree when individuals' participate in decision-making.

Johnston and Taylor (2018) provided a potential measurement system for engagement based on three tiers. The low level tier of mediated engagement is numeric in that it counts traditional communication interactions and social media views, likes, and visits. The mid-level tier of engagement focuses on relationships and connecting at the individual level to create trust, reciprocity, satisfaction, understanding, dialogue, and many other outcomes. The higher level tier of engagement indicates actions and impacts at a societal level. In Johnston and Taylor's (2018) conceptualization of engagement, the low level tier of engagement is the presence of activities, including engaging in social media activities (e.g., the counts of likes and shares on Facebook pages) and engaging in offline activities. However, the presence of activities is not a sufficient condition to achieve mid-level and higher level tier of engagement. To reach levels of engagement beyond interactivities, organizations and individual activists need to foster trust, robust public dialogue, coordinated actions, and social change, which can contribute the establishment of civil society (Sommerfeldt, 2013). Johnston and Lane (2018) also claimed that relational community engagement could be achieved by developing trustful, respectful, and positive interactions over time and creating shared meanings and understandings through

collaborations. Relational engagement is “not used instrumentally and more focused on enriching and enhancing the ongoing ‘conversation’” (Johnston & Lane, in press, p. 5). Relational engagement aims to create enduring, authentic, and trustful relationships. Only when sincere, trustful, and dialogic relationships are established, and individuals’ thoughts are taken into considerations in the community’s decision-making, will the highest level of engagement (societal engagement) occur.

Based on the previous studies on engagement tiers, in this study, the concept of engagement is operationalized as informational engagement at the lower tier, relational engagement at the mid-level tier, and societal engagement at the higher-tier. Social movement engagement is one type of engagement that is discussed in the next section.

Social Movement Engagement

Social movement engagement consists of the efforts of individuals, corporations, non-profit organizations, and governments. For social movement scholarship, each entity has been analyzed from different perspectives.

For individuals, during the social movement engagement process, individuals usually participate in the process voluntarily. Before the widespread of online platforms, traditional social movements were advocated through word-of-mouth, interpersonal communication, or door-to-door recruitment (Benford & Snow, 2000). With the emergence of social media, many social media users form their communities online, find likeminded people, and express their opinions online (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). As Bennett and Segerberg (2013) stated, activism research has have shifted from analyzing “collective actions” to analyzing “connective actions.” The networked social movement engagement becomes the main focus of social movement research.

Corporations may engage in social movements to promote corporate reputation, facilitate corporate social advocacy, raise the financial benefits (Dodd & Supa, 2014, 2015), and contribute to corporate social responsibility (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). For example, in 2015, Starbucks participated in the online discussion of racial issues and initiated the “Race Together” campaign across the U.S. to show their support and respect to the racial diversity (Starbucks, 2015). However, engaging in social movements cannot guarantee agreement and consensus (Avidar, 2018). In the case of Starbucks, employees at Starbucks were not completely trained and prepared for the conversations of racial issues. In 2018, Starbucks continued to struggle with race issues. The corporate social advocacy efforts of Starbucks turned into a large amount of online criticism against Starbucks (Ember, 2015). In April 2018, store employees of Starbucks involved in a racial controversy, and two black men being arrested at Starbucks in Philadelphia (Calfas, 2018). After heated critiques against Starbucks online and offline, Starbucks closed the company-owned stores on May 29, 2018, in the afternoon to conduct employees’ racial bias training (Calfas, 2018). The examples of Starbucks indicate that engaging in corporate social advocacy is not a one-time action for corporations and it requires continuous efforts of the corporations. When an organization tries to force the publics to agree with their opinion, it should be called “coercion” or “persuasion” rather than engagement (Ott & Theunissen, 2015). When publics perceive that they are part of a partnership, then the publics may become more engaged with the organization (Stoker & Tusinski, 2006).

For non-profit organizations, engaging in social movements are the ways to legitimate the existence and development of the organizations. For some non-profit organizations, facilitating social movement engagement is the objective of the organizations. For instance, Million Hoodies is a non-profit organization aiming to end racism, violence, and injustice (Million Hoodies, n.d.).

The organization has facilitated marches and rallies for the organization's mission and the long-term goals (Hon, 2016). If no more collective action is promoted and conducted by Million Hoodies, the organization may fade away gradually from the public view. Using public relations to encourage publics' social movement engagement sustains the non-profit organization and its issue.

In this study, individual activists are the main focus of study. Specifically, I am interested in exploring how individuals are connected through interpersonal relationships in social movements. Conceptually, *social movement engagement* is defined as an orientation that involves both cognitive and affective behaviors of individuals, corporations, non-profit organizations, media agencies, and other groups as partners of interaction and meaning co-creation to achieve social changes. Public relations has a role to play in facilitating interpersonal relationships in social movement engagement.

As discussed above, based on the engagement discussion of Johnston (2010), Johnston and Taylor (2018), and Johnston and Lane (2018), in the context of social movements, engagement is operationalized in three tiers: informational engagement about social movement relevant information, relational engagement to achieve organizational and interpersonal relationships for social movement objectives, and behavioral engagement to engaging in social change-driven social actions.

At the lower tier, informational engagement refers to engaging in meaning creation through information consumption or transmission regarding social movement relevant information. At this level, individual activists seek out information about collective actions, contribute their comments, opinions, and content about the collective actions. They also forward and share the social movement relevant information to others.

At the mid-level tier, individuals' engagement is operationalized as relationship-oriented engagement aiming to establish and maintain relationships with organizations (organization-public relationships) and relationships with the other individuals (interpersonal relationships). In the relationship-oriented engagement, social movement engagement goes beyond information consumption and transmission aiming to facilitate high quality organization-public relationships or interpersonal relationships. In this research, the interpersonal relationship is the main focus.

In the context of social movements, no one person is alone but rather is connected among various organization-public relationships or interpersonal relationships. To establish relationships with organizations, individual activists create connections with people who share the same social identity and values. To establish relationships with the other individual activists, individuals invest time, efforts, and resources to maintain interpersonal relationships. During the process of social movement engagement, movement participants get opportunities to meet people who share similar opinions as themselves and foster friendship. In this research, the mid-level tier relational engagement is examined at the interpersonal level.

At the highest tier, societal engagement refers to individuals' engagement in change-driven social actions. Individuals in social movements are goal-driven and purposeful in taking actions (Coleman, 1986). Individual activists want to achieve some specific objectives by the end of the campaign. Collective actions usually have objectives or goals such as to eliminate social injustice, diminish racial discrimination, advance gender equality or ethnic group equality, save the environment, and many more causes. Coleman (1971) explained that social changes occur in the following aspects: legal change, the change of economic resources (more equal opportunity to different groups), and changes in individuals (personalities and beliefs).

First, some social actions in social movements seek *changing people's behaviors*. Some social movements want to change individuals' attitudes toward socio-economic issues or change behaviors in everyday life (e.g., change individuals' discriminatory practices), while other social movements seek changing organizational behaviors (e.g., fight against organizations behaviors of causing pollution) (Blee & McDowell, 2012; Van Rooij, 2010).

Second, some social actions are initiated to facilitate *an evolution of social values and beliefs*. In race, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation relevant social movements, activists want to empower marginalized groups in society and achieve diversity, fairness, justice, equality, and social inclusion as the outcomes of social movements (Mundy, 2013; Sison, 2017).

Third, individual activists take collective actions to *change policies, legislation, and regulations*. Some social movement organizations seek to achieve or resist policy changes in their communication process (Sommerfeldt & Yang, 2017). For example, for some environmental movements, individual protesters and organizations fight for changes in decision making at the national level (Jancar-Webster, 1998; Spaargaren & Mol, 1992). Servaes and Malikhao (2010) claimed that social movements that supported HIV afflicted citizens wanted to achieve sustainable and inclusive social change and influence decision makers.

Fourth, for some revolutionary movements, individual activists aim to achieve *political structure change or infrastructural changes*. Some movements seek to make changes in political power, regimes, political institutions, political leaders, legislative system, and other aspects of political structure (Kim, 2018; Russell & Lamme, 2013; Taylor & Doerfel, 2003, 2011). The last aspect of social change is radical, fundamental, and momentous for a whole country and requires tremendous efforts. For political or societal changes in a country, citizens want to be part of decision making if they feel dissatisfied with some situations in society. Taylor (2010) claimed

that civil society is about “informed choice and enlightened action” (p. 8). In social movements, individual activists work to make their community or the country a better place to live. The ultimate goal for individual activists is to make subtle changes that make the processes of civil society occur. Civil society can be understood “the network of associations independent of the state whose members, through social interactions that balance conflict and consensus, seek to regulate themselves in ways consistent with a valuation of difference” (Hauser, 1998, p. 26). According to Hauser, the interests and relationships among different social groups are the core value of civil society and cooperation and negotiation of different partners’ interests are essential for civil society.

To make civil society occur, individuals, organizations, or groups should first feel safe to share their opinions and create rhetoric and discourse in a specific societal process or societal system through particular communication channels (Taylor, 2010). The voices of individuals and groups should target listeners/audiences in society who are willing to make changes and pursue the requests from individuals and groups (Taylor, 2010). In other words, in the context of social movements, civil society may not occur, if the following preconditions cannot be satisfied: (1) individual activists, organizations, or social groups do not feel free to share their opinions, (2) individual activists, organizations, or social groups do not have particular societal processes or societal systems to express their demands of changes, (3) communication channels are not accessible or restricted for communicating the desires of individuals and groups, and (4) the society is not open (usually decision makers) to individuals and groups’ requests. If the policy makers in the government or the decision makers in organizations have a low tolerance for dissent and decline to listen to or respond to the demands of social movements, the outcomes of social movement engagement are hard to be achieved.

In summary, the *operational definition* of individuals' social movement engagement is three tiers: (1) Lower-tier informational engagement: individuals engaging in social movement-relevant information's online and offline. (2) Mid-tier relational engagement: individuals' efforts in establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations and/or other individuals in the process of social movements, (3) Higher-tier: societal engagement: individuals' engaging in social actions that have societal impacts. Why do people join social movements? The next section explores motivations.

Motivations and Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement

Motivations for Engaging in Social Movements

Engaging in specific collective actions in social movements requires a cognitive process of weighing perceived barriers and perceived benefits (Klandermans, 1984; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Simon et al., 1998) and the degree of potential efficiency (Kim, 2018). Scholars have identified various motivations for individuals' social movement engagements.

First, the objectives and the causes of social movements that are attractive to participants could motivate them to engage in collective actions (Klandermans, 2004). When individuals feel dissatisfied with the current situation and perceive of "illegitimate inequality, feelings of relative deprivation, feelings of injustice, moral indignation about some state of affairs, or a suddenly imposed grievance" (Klandermans, 2004, p. 366), they are more willing to make changes by engaging in social movements. Individuals' feelings of strain or deprivation in society may come from cultural or structural distress (Williams, 2004). Klandermans (2004) named this type of motivation as instrumentality. Engaging in collective action allows individuals to fight against the experience of deprivation and injustice they experience in society.

Second, the congruence between the social movement causes and individuals' personal identity is seen as one motivation for individuals' social movement engagement (Klandermans, 2004). Collective actions seek to address issues and barriers that a group of people care about. Salient personal identities play a crucial role in shaping their perceptions of social issues (Ciszek, 2017b). When individuals share a similar identity with others, personal identity turns into collective identity (Klandermans, 2004). Most of the time, collective identity remains latent. When contextual circumstances remind individuals to perceive themselves as a member of a specific group, individuals start to be aware of their collective identities (Klandermans, 2004; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). When this happens, individuals share the same collective identities attaching values, beliefs, and belongingness to their community (Ciszek, 2017b; Lellis, 2012). For example, the social movements for LGBTQ group's rights receive higher motivation from the people who have the LGBTQ identity. Simon et al.'s (1998) study also supported that the participants' collective identity contributes to individuals' willingness to participate in collective actions. In the digital media context, when individuals recognize their shared community identity, they have the intention to be involved in public engagement around that identity (Men & Tsai, 2013; Tsai & Men, 2013).

Third, individual activists are embedded in the interpersonal networks and organization-public networks. Individuals may be motivated to participate in collective actions because of their personal networks. On the one hand, through diverse social ties, individual activists share social movement relevant information with friends, acquaintances, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and many other social ties (Ciszek, 2017b). In the digital media context, individuals extend their interpersonal relationships from real life contexts to online contexts, as well as create new interpersonal relationships in the digital sphere. Information about social movements

flows through interpersonal networks. On the other hand, parasocial relationships can be built online between publics and corporations. Parasocial interaction refers to human personality traits that are embedded in mass media (e.g., radio and television). The human personality traits make the audiences feel that a personal relationship is established between themselves and the mass media (Perse & Rubin, 1989; Thorson & Rodgers, 2006). In the digital context, organizations' social media representatives can interact with publics via blogs or social media and display some personalities with human beings' characteristics (Men & Tsai, 2013; Tsai & Men, 2013). Organizations use online interactions to create a sense of intimacy and connection with followers (Coombs & Holladay, 2015). In the dissertation, I want to understand if and how interpersonal networks (e.g., social ties) and organization-public networks (e.g., organization-public relationship, parasocial interaction) act as motivations for individuals' social movement engagement.

Fourth, when personal rewards and incentives are involved in collective actions, individuals are also motivated to participate. Reward motives refer to the outcomes that are beneficial at the personal level (Simon et al., 1998). Previous studies have shown that individuals can be motivated to contribute to collective actions because of tangible rewards, such as monetary incentives and making friends (Simon et al., 1998). For example, during the process of participating collective actions, individual activists may obtain friendships in the process. Other studies have found that individual activists are motivated to participate in collective actions to achieve affective satisfaction, emotional release (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001; Gould, 2004; Kim, 2018; Klandermans, 2004), and commitment to moral concerns (Jenkins, 1983). Emotions such as anger and pride motivate individuals to be involved in social movements (Gould, 2004). Goodwin et al. (2001) believed that some emotions are aroused because of dissatisfaction of

social justice or social system. Activists “weave together a moral, cognitive, and emotional package of attitudes” (Klandermans, 2004, p. 367) to motivate individuals’ participation in collective actions.

In summary, the motivations for social movement engagement include four types: (1) cause-driven motivation, (2) identity-driven motivation, (3) network-driven motivation, and (4) reward-driven motivation.

Motivations for engaging in social movements may not last forever. Insufficient gratification and diminishing commitments to the group or the social movement may reduce motivation in social movement engagement (Klandermans, 2004). The change of leadership, the perceived ineffectiveness of collective actions, and the difference between the real collective action and expectations may also undermine individuals’ passion for social movements. To understand individuals’ motivations for social movement engagement, RQ2a will be explored by conducting in-depth interviews.

RQ2a: What are the *motivations* for publics to engage in social movements?

For individuals, social movement engagement is motivated when people expect to achieve some desired outcomes. As outcomes of social movement engagement, individuals may achieve better interpersonal relationships, trust, and achieve the goals of social movements. In the next section, the outcomes of social movement engagement will be discussed.

Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement

There are a variety of outcomes of social movement engagement, including achieving social capital, creating trust, and facilitating civil society.

Social Capital

There are many kinds of capital. Social capital is less tangible than economic capital but just as important to society. Social capital is embedded in relationships among people (Coleman, 1988) and acts as an outcome of social relations (Taylor, 2010). Social capital can be conceptualized at the individual, group and community level.

At the individual level, social capital describes “how individuals access and use resources embedded in social networks to gain returns in instrumental actions (e.g., finding better jobs) or preserve gains in expressive actions” (Lin, 1999, pp. 31-32). To reap the benefits of social capital, it is essential for individuals to contribute to networking and interactions. Investment in social relations at the individual level including interpersonal interactions (Lin, 1999), giving others “gifts, services, words, time, attention, care, or concern” (Ihlen, 2007, p. 272) in the interpersonal relationships. Social capital investment (such as relationship building) facilitates the flow of information and further makes individuals gain access to more useful information, opportunities, resources, and choices (Lin, 1999). Burt (1997) introduced the structural hole theory to explain social capital in a network. He added the information benefits (access, timing, and referrals to information) and brokers’ control advantages (brokers get benefits from connecting contacts which are otherwise disconnected) to the social capital literature and claimed that individuals who are connected with others in networks could reap more information benefits (e.g., information access, timing, and referral) than the individuals who are disconnected. For brokers, the structural hole is an opportunity to bring people from two networks together and facilitate the flow of information. Overall, applying the social capital concept to the social movement context, at the individual level, social ties provide individual activists useful information about collective actions. Due to the strategic positions of individuals (e.g., structural hole), some individual

activists possess valuable information about collective actions and have more powers in the network than the individual activists who have less resources and information.

At the group level, social capital refers to “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 2000, p. 67). Social capital at the group level can be seen in two aspects. First, within the group, as Lin (1999) claimed, some properties of a group are essential to produce and maintain collective assets such as trust and norm. The *reinforcement* function of social capital, the function of making the individuals’ social identities stronger, is not seen in physical capital and human capital. Social relations are expected to reinforce individuals’ social identity and self-recognition (Lin, 1999). Individuals who share similar interests and through interactions and exchanging resources experience emotional support, trustworthiness, mutual respect, and friendship from the other members in the social group (Coleman, 1988; Ihlen, 2007; Lin, 1999). Second, inter-group relationships are beneficial for resource exchange, finding new opportunities, and obtaining extra support from the external environment (Burt, 1992). Communication allows group members to negotiate with internal members and external collaborators to develop relationships and to accomplish goals. All types of social relations merge as information sources to facilitate actions (Coleman, 1988). In the context of social movements, within a group (e.g., LGBT, African Americans), group members create shared values, belief, trust, and emotional support through reinforcing their social identities. Then the group members with similar social identities may collaborate to fight against social injustice. A social group can obtain support and external resources for collective actions by establishing inter-group relationships.

At the community/societal level, *social structure* is crucial for facilitating the formation of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998, 2000). Lin (1999) defined the

community/societal level of social capital as “resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (p. 35). According to this definition of social capital, two crucial conceptual elements are applied in the social movement context: social structure and mobilized actions. Social structure indicates people’s differences in various lines: social structure is an aggregation of individuals’ socio-economic class at the macro level, the structure of social ties in society at the meso level, and the norms, values, and cultural beliefs that shape people’s social actions at the micro level (Martin, 2009). All the levels of social structures take effect on individuals’ outcomes of social movement engagement.

At the community level, social capital is created through the connections and relationships among members of a community or in a nation (Putnam, 2000). Social capital can be perceived as a resource of a city or a country (Portes, 2000). Social capital is “an asset of children in intact families; in the next, it is an attribute of networks of traders; and in the following, it becomes the explanation of why entire cities are well governed and economically flourishing while others are not” (Portes, 2000, p. 3). According to Portes (2000), social capital can be achieved from various types of relationships, including neighborhood relations, business relations, organization-public relations, government-public relations, inter-organizational relations, and many other types of social relations. Social capital is the outcome of various types of relationships in a community or a country (Taylor, 2010; Taylor & Doerfel, 2011).

At the organizational level, to measure social capital, the density of the network (Saffer, 2016; Taylor & Doerfel, 2003, 2011), the centrality of the organization (Saffer, 2016), the size of the network (Ihlen, 2007), the ties among various types of organizations need to be taken into consideration. At the individual level, the concept of social capital contains three elements: “resources embedded in a social structure; accessibility to such social resources by individuals;

and use or mobilization of such social resources by individuals in purposive actions” (Lin, 1999, p. 35). To operationalize the measures, social capital at the individual level can be measured by the individuals’ embeddedness in the structure of a network, accessibility to opportunities, and the action-oriented use of social resources (Lin, 1999).

Establish Trust

Trust can be achieved during the process of establishing relationships (Men et al., 2018). When social capital is created in the process of organization-public relationship or interpersonal relationships, the trust will be enhanced. Coleman (1988), Taylor (2010), Lin (2017), and many other scholars. believed that social capital creates trust. Interpersonal trust or organization-public trust in social movements can be achieved when relational engagement is created. In the process of civic engagement, citizens in the networks establish reciprocal relationships, facilitate communication, coordination, finally achieve social trust (Putnam, 2000). In the network theory, betweenness centrality is an indicator of trust (Taylor & Doerfel, 2003). Betweenness centrality measures “the frequency at which an individual node lies on the shortest path connecting other nodes in the network” (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom & Valente, 2017, p. 3). Individuals or organizations with high betweenness centrality control information flows in a network and serve as the bridge in a network (Freeman, 1979). In the context of social movements engagement, trust can be produced.

Facilitate Social Change

As mentioned in the social movement engagement section, collective actions usually have objectives or goals to achieve. When collective actions are accomplished, individual activists may review and evaluate what social changes they achieved through collective actions. This is a post-evaluation process. The accomplished social changes can be classified into the

following categories: (1) at the individual level, some changes in individuals' behaviors may expected to be changed, (2) collective actions may cause changes of social values and beliefs, (3) collective actions may generate some changes policies, legislation, and regulations, (4) some political structure and infrastructural changes or fundamental changes in society will be achieved as the outcome of social movement engagement.

Overall, social movement engagement could facilitate the production of social capital, trust, and facilitate social changes. Heath (2006) believed that public relations is used to negotiate relationships among different entities and can contribute to making the society a better place to live. In this research, I want to understand which aspects of outcomes of social movement engagement were achieved by individual activists and what efforts did they make to achieve the outcomes.

RQ2b: How are the *outcomes* of social movement engagement achieved?

In this research, social capital is the main dependent variable to be examined as the outcome of social movement engagement. I will examine how three levels of social movement engagement (i.e., societal engagement, relational engagement, and informational engagement) influence the production of social capital and how lower-tier engagement impacts the mid-tier and higher tier social movement engagement. The following hypotheses will be examined.

Hypothesis 1: Societal engagement, relational engagement, offline informational engagement and online informational engagement positively influence bonding social capital.

Hypothesis 2a: Relational engagement positively influences societal engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Offline informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.

Hypothesis 4a: Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and societal engagement.

Individuals' social movement engagement may help them achieve a variety of outcomes at the personal level. However, many reasons impede individuals' long-term engagement in social movements. In the next section, social movement members' retention and willingness of future social movement engagement will be discussed.

Member Retention and Willingness of Future Social Movement Engagement

Social movement retention refers to social movement groups keeping current members or replacing lost group members with new recruits (Bunnage, 2014; McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992). Member retention is crucial for the long-term development of social movements. Social movement participants bring in human resources and financial support to the operation of social movements. If social movements do not have sufficient members, movement outcomes cannot be sustained.

Research in social movement member retention has been conducted at three levels: individual level, social level, and organizational level (Bunnage, 2014). At the *individual level*, Corrigan-Brown (2012) summarized that individuals may have several changes at the personal level in regards to social movement engagement: 1) disengagement. Some individuals may not believe in the advocated causes of social movements and decide to disengage in the movements. 2) transfer. Individuals may have significant personal life changes that cause them to transfer from one location to the other locations of a particular social movement. Because of relocation, many social movement participants need to transfer to new locations and discontinue their engagement in the previous locations. 3) abeyance. Some social movement participants may have short time disengagement because of personal reasons, then come back to re-engage in social movements. *At the social level*, interpersonal relationships may change individuals' decision-making in social movement engagement. The previous research has found that the more

interpersonal contacts individuals have within the movement group, the longer the duration of the individuals' memberships (McPherson et al., 1992). Interpersonal connections to fellow activists within a social movement group play crucial roles in member retention (Downton & Wehr, 1991). If individuals have closer interpersonal relationships and stronger ties outside of a particular social movement group, individuals may change to other social movements (McPherson et al., 1992). *At the organizational level*, the goals of social movement organizations are not static. After a period of time, social movement organizations may narrow down their concentrations or broaden organizations' focuses on other interrelated issues. The change of organizations' goals may make members feel more or less appealing to engage in the movements (Bunnage, 2014; Corrigan-Brown, 2012).

Previous research has examined the factors that impact individuals' social movement retention. However, research about the relationships among individuals' willingness to participate in future social movement participation, types of social movement engagement, and the willingness of people to participate in future movement engagement have not been explored.

Hypothesis 5: Social movement participants who have higher societal level social movement engagement (5a), higher mid-level relational social movement engagement (5b), higher offline informational engagement (5c), and higher online informational engagement (5d) would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.

Hypothesis 6: For different types of social movements, individuals have different levels of willingness to participate in future social movement activities.

To achieve long-term social movement engagement, individual activists and groups need to mobilize tangible and intangible resources and make the social movement relevant

information heard by more people. Interpersonal networks have been a crucial way to maintain the robust and trustworthy relationships within social movements. In the next section, the literature of how individual activists form their personal networks will be discussed.

Focal Roles and Cooperation in the Networked Social Movements

Individual Activists' Ego-networks

To achieve the objectives and goals of social movements, individual activists need to cooperate in social relations with other people in collective actions. Among various types of social relations, including relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other social relations, individual activists need to decide whom to get information from or whom to talk to. For a social movement network, if a person becomes a focal actor, other individuals in the network would like to receive the information from the focal actor. Then the focal actor achieves a vital role in the network and influences the flow of information and meaning creation. Being a central position in a network, the focal actors receive more requests for assistance from others who depend on the focal actors (Burke, Weir, & Duncan, 1976; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002).

According to social exchange theory, interpersonal interactions generate reciprocal interdependence, relationships with high-quality (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), and leadership in a group (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Foa and Foa (1980) summarized that interpersonal exchanges include six types of resources: love, status, services, information, goods, and money. Blau (1964) believed that the relationships that are established from economic exchanges are long-term and with less interpersonal attachments, while the relationships that are formed from social exchanges create more prolonged and stronger interpersonal attachments. The mutual social exchanges in interpersonal relationships enhance

the quality of relationships, trust, commitment, loyalty, and interpersonal cooperation (Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, 2012).

In this research, the social exchange theory provides a theoretical foundation to explain the interpersonal relationships among individual activists. Among the six types of resources in social exchange, individual activists usually exchange information resources during the process of social movements. Social movement relevant information acts as a type of resource transmitting and exchanging among individual activists and facilitates the development of interpersonal relationships.

In the process of exchanging resources, individuals create cooperative relationships. Cooperation refers to “the act of working together to one end” (Mead, 1937, p. 8). Deutsch (1949) explained that when individuals are involved in specific social situations, they tend to select from two types of goal interdependency (also named goal structure): positive goal interdependency and negative goal interdependency. The positive goal interdependence refers to individuals’ goal achievement is positively related to the goal attainment of others and the negative goal interdependency refers to the individuals’ goal attainment is negatively related to the probability of others’ achieving their goals (Deutsch, 1949, 2011). In the context of social movements, individual activists share similar goals—achieve the objectives of social movements. One person’s goal attaining is positively related to the other people’s goal attaining. More cooperative relationships are expected to occur in the process of social movements. Cooperating in networked social movements facilitates meaning co-creation among activists. In the process of goal attainment, the cooperative process includes open and honest communication of information among individuals (Deutsch, 2011).

Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson (2018) claimed that two types of network research designs exist in social science: the whole-network research design and the personal-network design. *The whole-network research design* examines the “set of ties among all pairs of nodes in a given set” (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 33). For example, in the context of social movements, we might study who retweets information from whom about the social movement relevant information among all the members of a given social movement. The whole-network research design seeks an understanding of the network at the macro-level. The *personal-network design* is also known as ego-network analysis and ego-centered research, which examines the relationships between focal nodes and alters (Borgatti et al., 2018). An ego-network is a network of contacts (alters) that form around a particular node (ego). Alters in an ego-centered network have direct connections with the ego. An example of the personal-network design is Mario Luis Small’s (2017) book *Someone to Talk to*. In his book, Small explored when people need someone to talk to about some difficulties they meet in their life, to whom did they turn when they need confidants.

In the personal-network research design, the key informants are the egos, and the individual activists who have connections with the key informants are the alters. An examination of egos and their relationships with alters in networks helps us identify the most powerful *social mediators* in their social movement networks and help us assess their influences on social movement operation.

Yang (2018) emphasized influential social mediators acting as “bridging hubs” to ensure information travels from one ego-network or cluster to another. These influential social mediators are also seen as the most powerful actors in their ego networks (Yang, 2018). Through social mediators, the information from and about social movements can penetrate the internal

communities of diverse publics. Public relations scholars who are interested in studying social movement engagement need to know more about these people.

RQ3a: At the ego network level, who are the social mediators in the social movement networks?

RQ3b: What network structure does the social movement organization have?

Similarities in Ego Networks

In ego-centered networks, a network is formed primarily because of four types of dyadic relationships: co-occurrences, social relations, interactions, and flows (Borgatti et al., 2018). All the four types of dyadic relationships could be the reasons to facilitate the formation of social networks.

For the first type of dyadic relationship, co-occurrences refer to actors in a network sharing similar memberships (e.g., same clubs or events), participating in the same event, similar location (physical distance), and have the same attribute (e.g., same gender or interest) (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011; Borgatti et al., 2018). For the ego network analysis, I will ask questions about the participants' ethnicity, age, gender, geographic location, and club membership. The answers will be used to explore how the similarities of individual activities' locations, memberships, and attributes contribute to the formation of social movement networks. The demographic and geographic information help me explore which factor contributes to the formation of the networks.

The second type of dyadic relationship *social relations* refer to kinship relations, affective relations (e.g., like, dislike), and perceptual relations (e.g., knows) (Borgatti et al., 2018). To study the ties from the social relations perspective, I will ask the participants to identify their

social relations with the other individual activists to whom they contacted in the process of engaging in social movements.

Fuhse and Mützel (2011) argued that the statistical analysis of the above four types of dyadic relationships explains how attributes of actors (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity), various types of social relations, interactions, and information flows help the social mediators become bridging hubs in given networks. Understanding social movement networks helps public relations practitioners to know how to mobilize human resources and invite more people to engage in collective actions. Based on the research results of RQ3c, public relations practitioners would understand how to use social ties, similar memberships, geographic/demographic similarities to recruit more participants for actions.

RQ3c: At the ego network level, how do similarities influence the production of social capital?

The ego-network approach examines the social movement networks from a micro level, which seeks to understand the interpersonal relationships in small groups. If we want to understand the social movement networks at a macro level, we need to examine all the ties and nodes within particular social movement networks.

The Whole-network of Social Movements

As mentioned above, a whole-network research design aims to examine the ties among all the nodes in a given network. In this study, to provide in-depth analysis of social networks at the macro-level, we dive deeper into the holistic networks of social movements. The collection of data from electronic sources can help examine the ties among follower and followee (Borgatti et al., 2018). To examine the social networks at the macro level, *Salesforce Social Studio*, a social media listening tool, will be used to collect social media data about social movements. In this dissertation, after the individual activists are invited to the study, the social movements that

they participate in will be examined. For example, if the individual activists participated in Black Lives Matter and Women's March, I will use Salesforce Social Studio to collect social media data about these two social movements and will examine the whole networks of these two social movements. The whole-network analysis from Twitter data source provides an opportunity to examine the affiliation networks and dyadic relationships in online social movements. The whole-network analysis adds extra value to the public relations scholarship regarding how informational engagement in social media facilitates collaboration in the digital social movements.

Centralization is one property to describe the characteristic of the overall network (Borgatti et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2017). Centralization refers to “the extent to which a network is dominated by a single node. Specifically, the extent to which one node is much more central than all others” (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 333). The larger the index of centralization, the more likely one actor is more central than the other actors in the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In other words, in the social movement context, when all the people only receive social movement-relevant information from one focal actor, the centralization is high. An example of a centralized network with a higher score in centralization is the *star network* when all the nodes are connected to one focal actor. The most decentralized example of a network with a lower score in centralization is the *circle network* when all the nodes are only connected to the nodes next to them. Centralization of a group relates to group efficiency in problem-solving. Freeman (1978) argued that if a person in a central position in a network, he or she can work as the coordinator for the whole group and indicates control of communication – “can influence the group by withholding or distorting information in transmission” (p. 221). Therefore, networks with high centralization may have the risks of receiving distorted or controlled information in the

information dissemination process. For public relations practitioners, in the process of organizing collective actions, it is essential to consider how to transmit information and co create meaning. The size of the social movement network matters. Therefore, the centralization analysis explains how to increase network effectiveness in social movements.

Network density creates social capital (Taylor & Doerfel, 2011). Network density is used to describe the overall properties of networks. Taylor and Doerfel (2003) found that a relatively moderate density facilitated order in the network. A moderately dense network allows for social movements to achieve their objectives as there are enough relationships for collective action. A dense network is inefficient for information flows because it returns less diverse information for the same cost as the sparse network (Taylor & Doerfel, 2003). Social movement practitioners take roles in meaning-making. Therefore, network density matters to practitioners to make their information and narratives transmitted to publics. In the social movement context, a social movement network with dense characteristics may become inefficient in information transmission and meaning creation. For example, the movement may spend too much time and resources on information flows such as newsletters, websites, and social media rather than spending time on activism. In addition to network density, network reciprocity is also important to social movement practitioners.

The reciprocity property of a whole network measures “in directed networks, when an actor receives a tie from another actor and returns a tie to that same actor” (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 344). Higher level of reciprocity indicates better interactions among actors in the same network. Bortree and Seltzer (2009) argued that in public relations, reciprocal relationships in social media are crucial for maintaining long-lasting relationships for advocacy groups. For

public relations practices, communication practices and information flows should be reciprocal and dialogical.

The whole network-level social network analysis will be conducted to explore the density and centralization of the social movement networks. From a holistic view, RQ4 will explore the relational characteristics of social movements at the macro level.

RQ4: What are the whole network-level characteristics of social movement networks?

Research Questions Summary

Overall, the research examines how do individual activists serve as co-creators of meanings in online and offline contexts (RQ1), motivations (RQ2a) and outcomes (RQ2b) of social movement engagement, at the ego network level, who are the social mediators in the social movement networks (RQ3a), What network structure does the social movement organization have (RQ3b), how do group member similarities contribute to the production of social capital (RQ3c), and from a macro view, what are the characteristics of social movements at the whole network-level (RQ4).

Key Concept Summary

Motivations	Engagement	Outcomes of Engagement
•Cause-driven motivations •Identity-driven motivations •Network-driven motivations •Reward-driven motivations	•Low tier: informational engagement •Mid-level tier: relational engagement •Highest tier: behavioral engagement	•Social capital •Trust •Facilitate social change

Overall, the research has three main purposes. First, it seeks to expand engagement theory in public relations. The research aims to extend how we understand social movement engagement in the following aspects through in-depth interviews and social network analysis methods. Second, it will provide conceptualizations and operationalizations of social movement

engagement. In the literature review section, an operationalization of social movement engagement has been discussed. With the survey method, the operationalization of three levels of social movement engagement will be tested. Lastly, the dissertation will examine the occurrence of cooperation in the process of social movement engagement. Based on the literature of social exchange theory, with the in-depth interview method, I want to understand the process of social movement engagement, how individual activists cooperate with each other to achieve the social movement goals.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative based social network analysis, in-depth interviews, and a survey were applied to the dissertation. The first section of this chapter reviews the advantages of using mixed methods design. The second section explains how in-depth interviews were used to answer specific research questions. The third section of the chapter outlines the benefits of using social network analysis method. The final section in this chapter discusses the survey instrument that was applied to measure the operationalizations of social movement engagement. The combination of four methods provides a well-rounded approach to understand a public relations approach to social movement engagement.

Why Mixed Methods?

Mixed methods have been defined as “the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of data at one or more stages in the process of research” (Gray, 2009, p. 204). The mixed methods research has several advantages. First, triangulation and complementation can be achieved by using mixed methods. Applying two or more methods reduces the uncertainty and biases in the process of interpreting data. Every research method has weaknesses. By collecting the data with two more methods, researchers are able to compensate the weaknesses that one research method may have (Gray, 2009). Second, mixed methods design facilitates the development of new knowledge and new insight. Using mixed methods can broaden the breadth and depth of a study. Third, mixed methods research allows flexible design. Both sequential designs and sequential designs can be applied (Gray, 2009). The quantitative research methods seek for “time- and context-free generalization” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14) and objectivity, while the qualitative research methods

provide rich description and “multiple-constructed realities” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14) of the phenomenon. A rigorous research design is required to widen the range of a study with multiple approaches. As Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) summarized, mixed methods designs can be formed around different types based on the following three criteria: First, there is the *time dimension*. Researchers may use quantitative method and qualitative method concurrently or use the different methods sequentially. Second, there is the *research method emphasis dimension*. In mixed methods design, quantitative and qualitative research methods may have equal status or one research method has dominant status. Third, there is the degree of mix dimension. In mixed methods design, quantitative and qualitative research methods can be either partially mixed or fully mixed in research design.

In the research quantitative and qualitative methods have equal roles in the research design. There is a sequence in the process of research. A mixed methods design of qualitative method (in-depth interview) — qualitative method (qualitative-based social network analysis) — quantitative method (quantitative-based social network analysis) — quantitative method (survey) sequential order were adopted.

First, individual activists who have participated in different social movements were be invited to the study through a snowball sampling technique. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand their motivations and interpersonal relationships in social movements.

Second, the whole networks of three social movements, Women’s March, Black Lives Matter, and Knox Blue Dots, were examined to understand the network structures and the key influencers of the three movements.

Third, based on the previous methods, a survey method was adopted to test the measures of three levels of social movement engagement.

Lastly, the ego network analysis was applied to analyze how individuals in a social movement create interpersonal relationship and how similarities of group members facilitate the production of social capital.

In the next section, the in-depth interview method will be discussed.

In-depth Interview Data Collection and Analysis

Why In-depth Interviews?

The in-depth interview method is perceived as a “digging tool of social science” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 171). The method is suitable for understanding a new field, tracing a process or a causation, and studying nuance and subtlety (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Because of the unique cultural codes individuals have, during the process of in-depth interview, the interviewees rarely narrate their experience from a neutral standpoint (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). In-depth interview is an approach to understand how knowledge and worldviews have formed in people’s minds. Many qualitative researchers are guided by social constructionism paradigm that focuses on how people perceive the world they live in and how people interpret their experience (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

By using a series of semi-structured or structured interview questions, researchers talk to those who have knowledge of the problem of interest and attempt to understand a phenomenon. Through listening to the interviewees’ stories, accounts, and explanations, researchers are able to understand people’s justification of the social actors and social conducts they have experienced (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

In-depth interviews were conducted first to answer RQ1 (how do individual activists serve as co-creators of meanings in online and offline contexts?), RQ2a (what are the *motivations*

for individual activists to engage in social movements), and RQ2b (what are the *outcomes* of social movement engagement). The interview guide is attached in Appendix A.

In-depth interviews enhance my understanding of individuals' as meaning cocreators, motivations and outcomes of social movements, and social movement engagement. The next section addresses the social network analysis that was applied for analyzing the roles of individual activists in social movement networks.

Sampling Process and Research Participants of In-depth Interviews

Doing in-depth interviews helps the researcher gain a better understanding of how individuals co-created the meanings of social movements, the motivations and the outcomes of social movement engagement, and they helped the researcher construct the measures for the concept of social movement engagement.

To learn about how engagement occurred, snowball sampling was used for reaching out to potential participants of the social movements. Both face-to-face interviews and phone interviews were conducted for the research from February 20 to May 30, 2019. The length of the interviews lasted from 33 minutes to 62 minutes. A total of 23 participants were involved in the research, including 13 participants who primarily engaged in the Women's March, 7 participants who were the Knox Blue Dots leaders and members, and 3 participants who attended the Black Lives Matter movement. It is noticeable that the Knox Blue Dots actively supported the local Women's March in Knoxville, Tennessee. All the leaders and members of the Knox Blue Dots engaged in the Women's March in the market square in Knoxville.

For the Women's March movement part, the first interviewee was an active Women's March leader on campus. Through her network, more participants were identified and invited to participate in the interviews. Their ages ranged from 18 to 74 years old. The majority of the

Women's March interviewees came from Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee, as well as some participants from Oregon, Michigan, Ohio, Washington D.C. and New York. As for the Knox Blue Dots, the first interviewee was a leader in the organization with more participants identified through her and other participants' personal networks. All of the Knox Blue Dots participants were females from Tennessee.

All participants' real names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Women's March participants were named as Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, ..., and Participant M. Knox Blue Dots participants were named as Participant N, Participant O, Participant P..., and Participant T.

The goal of the interviews was to reach saturation. Saturation in qualitative research means "when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added" (Bowen, 2008, p. 140). In other words, saturation is reached when no new themes or information are added to the research and the researcher ends recruiting new interviewees. A total of 13 interviews were conducted to reach saturation for the Women's March data and a total of 7 interviews were conducted to reach saturation for the Knox Blue Dots data.

Finding Black Lives Matter participants was more difficult. During three months of data collection, the researcher used the following ways to reach out to the Black Lives Matter participants: First, the researcher sent emails to colleagues and friends in the researcher's personal network. Second, the researcher contacted an active African-American student activist on campus. Third, the researcher contacted four African-American student associations on campus, including Black Student Union, Black Educators of Tomorrow, Black Cultural Programming Committee, and Black Law Students Association. Fourth, the researcher contacted the Black Lives Matter official website. Fifth, the researcher joined in Facebook groups of

different Black Lives Matter chapters (e.g., Knoxville chapter, Memphis chapter, Nashville chapter, Atlanta chapter) and contacted the manager of the Facebook groups. Sixth, the researcher posted the participant recruitment information on the National Communication Association's CRTNET email list hoping to reach a broader audience. Yet, only three participants were recruited in three months. The data from the Black Lives Matter movement interviewees did not reach saturation. In the data analysis section, the Black Lives Matter transcripts were not analyzed. Possible reasons why BLM participants were so difficult to reach will be discussed in the conclusion section.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied for analyzing the transcripts. The process of thematic analysis followed six steps: First, the research became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts. Second, some initial codes were generated across the entire transcripts. Third, the research combined some initial codes into potential themes. Fourth, the researcher reviewed all the themes and generated a thematic map of the qualitative research analysis. Fifth, the researcher defined the themes and renamed each theme. And sixth, a qualitative research report was produced (Braun & Clarke, 2008).

Epistemologically, the data interpretation followed the constructivist approach. It assumes that truth and meaning do not exist in some external world. The research proceeded from the assumption that the world is socially constructed and subjective. Meaning is to constructed, not discovered. In the constructivist approach, subjects construct their own meaning in different ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Gray, 2013) and it is the researcher's job to construct their stories.

Whole Network Data Collection and Analysis

Why Whole Network Analysis?

Second, social network analysis (SNA) was used to analyze the key actors in the network of social movement and how information flows among actors. SNA is an approach and a set of techniques to examine relationships in a network and understand how resources and information flow among individuals, groups, and organizations (Kent, Sommerfeldt, & Saffer, 2016). SNA can also be used to explore the wider contexts where organizations and public reside in (Yang & Taylor, 2015). The basic assumption of social network theories is that individuals in society create connections through social relations and interactions, which further create a web of relationships and social order (Borgatti et al., 2009).

Applying SNA to social science studies has many benefits. Kent et al. (2016) believed that SNA help researchers answer the following three types of questions:

(1) relations between individuals and groups, (2) how connections influence individuals and groups, and (3) how individuals and groups create, maintain, and transform networks (p. 92).

Fuhse and Mützel (2011) summarized that social network analytics can be divided into three types: formal network analysis, statistical analysis of personal networks, and qualitative research techniques. The first two types are the quantitative based social network techniques and the last one is the qualitative based one. The formal network analysis was applied to examine “the centrality measures, positional analysis from cliques or blocks” (Fuhse & Mützel, 2011, p. 1076), while the statistical analysis of personal networks provided a “description of network populations by attributes explanation of individual determinants and effects of network positions” (Fuhse & Mützel, 2011, p. 1076). The formal network analysis helps the researcher

understand how some individual activists achieved a focal position. The statistical analysis of personal networks explains how attributes of actors (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity) help the focal actors achieve focal positions (Fuhse & Mützel, 2011). The qualitative research technique allows the researcher to understand the meaning creation among actors in a network. “Three main methodological approaches pursue different aims and enter the research process at different phases. It is quite natural, then, that the three approaches should be combined in order to arrive at a fuller picture of social networks, and to provide for an integrated and reflexive research process” (Fuhse & Mützel, 2011, p. 1074). In the dissertation, to answer different research questions and to get a comprehensive understanding of the social movement networks, the researcher applied the methodological approaches above.

“A network consists of a set of actors or nodes along with a set of ties of a specified type (such as friendship) that link them. The ties interconnect through shared end points to form paths that indirectly link nodes that are not directly tied” (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011, p. 1169). Therefore, the units of analysis in social network studies are two types: *nodes* and *ties*.

Nodes, or actors, are necessary for the formation of networks. The nodes in social network analysis can be both individuals and organizations. As Saffer (2016) argued, “Traditional social science methods examine the patterns of social actors’ attributes (i.e., characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors), whereas a network perspective examines the relationships and the patterns of relationships among social actors” (p. 172). In social network analysis, scholars have studied how actors establish relationships within and between groups (Labianca, Brass, & Gray, 1998; Oh, Chung, & Labianca, 2004), over time, across different regions (Taylor & Doerfel, 2003, 2011), and how actors form communities, achieve the advantageous roles of some actors in the network (Borgatti, 2005), and create social capital

(Taylor & Doerfel, 2011). Social network theory provides an explanation to the question that “how autonomous individuals can combine to create enduring, functioning societies” (Borgatti et al., 2009, p. 892). In the whole network analysis section, individuals, organizations, publics, media, and the other partners of social movements are the actors that were analyzed.

Ties are also examined in social network studies. The discussion of ties in social network analytics will be discussed in the ego network analysis section.

In the social movement context, SNA method help the researcher understand the group-level relational features of the holistic social movement networks. As Borgatti et al. (2018) explained, researchers can collect network data from either primary source or secondary source. For the primary source, researchers can ask participants questions or observe individuals’ behaviors. With the personal network approach, the researcher can understand how interpersonal networks facilitate social movements at the micro level.

Second, Borgatti et al. (2018) also argued that researchers can use secondary data to collect network data, including historical marriage records, electronic data resources, and many more. “Some of the computer based data generated by social media, such as Facebook and even email represent a traditional form between primary and secondary data” (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 35). Network analysis could be used at the whole network level to examine the entire nodes that were included in a network. From a holistic view, the whole network dataset helps us understand how all the actors in a network were connected through information flows. Many social movements have benefitted from using various social media platforms. Virtual networks facilitate the exchange ideas and information among groups, help social movement participants find like-minded people, identify socio-political issues, and find out the social movement activities to participate in (Keller, 2012).

Data Collection

In this study, Salesforce social studio was used to collect the data for each social movement discussion online. The study examined the mentions and retweets networks in digital social movements as types of individuals' online informational engagement in social movements. Salesforce Social Studio was used to collect data for the three movements: Women's March, Black Lives Matter, and Knox Blue Dots. In this study, the unit of analysis was edges between social media actors. Edges are ties that create relationships among people, organizations, and communities. When using retweets and mentions on Twitter, individuals create edges (ties). In a mention network, a Twitter user (A) types a symbol "@" before a username (Twitter user B) when referring to a particular Twitter account. A tie is created between user A and B. In a retweet network, if a Twitter user A reposts a tweet that is originally created by user B. A retweet edge (tie) is developed from A and B. In both the mention network and the retweet network, user A has an outgoing tie and the user B has an incoming tie. Ties in social networks create networked user relationships in social media. Examining ties help the researcher understand who is at the center positions of social networks and who situates in a broker position in networks. Knowing the central positions allows us to identify the key actors in social movement networks.

Mentions and retweets are the two conversational conventions on Twitter that connect users (Jackson & Welles, 2015). Through examining retweet and mention networks, the researcher can identify the media elites and influencers in social networks (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2012). For the mention network, Twitter users use the mention as dynamic links to internationally make another social media users engaged in a discussion of a particular topic (Colleoni, Rozza, & Arvidsson, 2014; Guille & Favre, 2015). The retweets (e.g., social media user A retweeted user B's movement relevant information) and mentions (e.g., social media user

A felt user B was relevant to a social movement and used “@” symbol to remind user B in a tweet) enhance our understanding of the lower-tier online informational engagement.

For the retweet network, Bastos, Raimundo, and Travitzki (2013) argued, “message diffusion within Twitter is heavily dependent on retweets” (p. 263). By exploring the retweet networks, we can understand how the information about the three social movements have been diffused and shared within Twitter. Additionally, previous research supported that Twitter users tend to retweet messages from those who share similar attitudes and opinions as themselves (Barberá, Jost, Nagler, Tucker, & Bonneau, 2015; Shin & Thorson, 2017). As a result, an “echo chamber” effect is formed due to a tendency of social media users to create homogeneous communities and to affiliate with like-minded individuals that share similar perspectives (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Colleoni et al., 2014). Therefore, examining retweet networks help us understand how like-minded individuals form communities in social media for different social movements.

Mention edges and retweet edges were identified with the following two approaches: For the “*mention network*,” the researcher first removed all the emails that originally included in tweet text, then attempted to find the sub-strings right after the symbol “@.” Each sub-string was a mention user. A mention edge was found between the Twitter user who mentioned others and the Twitter user who was being mentioned. For the “*retweet network*,” by using the look-up Application programming interface (API) and the tweet ID collected from Salesforce Marketing Cloud’s Social Studio, we found retweet-status or quote-status for the tweets in this study. If either retweet-status or quote-status existed, the researcher continued to find the user screen name (i.e., username) of the retweeted or quote retweeted posts. Then the researcher continuously attempted to find the retweeted or quote retweeted posts until it reached the original

author of the tweet. A retweet edge was identified between a Twitter user who retweeted and the original author of a tweet. In this research, retweeting and mentioning behaviors in social media are considered as a lower-tier online informational engagement (Johnston & Taylor, 2018).

For whole networks, researchers have identified several measures to reflect networks' features. Three indicators can be used to assess network centrality: *degree*, *betweenness*, and *closeness* (Wu & Yang, 2017). The degree consists of two types: in-degree and out-degree. In-degree refers to "the number of incoming ties received by a node" (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2018, p. 339). If a Twitter account has a large number of in-degrees, it means a large number of social media users are connected to the account in a particular context and the posts from the account can reach out to more users. Out-degree refers to "the number of outgoing ties sent by a node" (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 342). If a Twitter user A uses @ symbol to refer to different Twitter accounts or retweets frequently, user A has a high out-degree. If B is being mentioned by many other Twitter users and the tweets created by B are retweeted many times by other Twitter users, user B has high in-degree. The high in-degree actors are the individuals or organizational accounts that received a lot of incoming ties from others in the movements' networks. It helps us understand how social media users use online informational engagement to reach out to people whom they thought to have close connections with the movements.

Betweenness measures the extent to which a social media user bridges relationships in the network (Wu & Yang, 2017). Betweenness centrality helps us understand how network members "filter information and to color or distort it as they pass it along" (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013, p. 175). Nodes with high betweenness centrality tend to filter information (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom, & Valente, 2017). Krackhardt (1992) indicated that nodes with high betweenness centrality act as gatekeepers that control the flows of information through a network. Analyzing

betweenness centrality helps us understand how information was filtered or distorted during the process of online informational engagement.

Closeness measures the extent to which a social media user can avoid the control of other social media users and get connected with others directly (Wu & Yang, 2017). Closeness is measured by eigenvector of geodesic distances. Eigenvector centrality is “the extent to which an ego is connected to nodes that are high in centrality, that is, they are well connected in the network” (Sommerfeldt & Taylor, 2011, p. 202). The eigenvector centrality helps us understand how individuals were connected to the actors that had high centrality in social movements with online informational engagement. The in-degree centrality counts every incoming ties an actor receives. In contrast, eigenvector centrality treats an actor as more important if the actor is connected to other important actors in the network.

For the Women’s March dataset, keywords and hashtags, such as women’s march, #womensmarch, #womenempowerment, were used for retrieving the publicly-available tweets. Hashtags have been used by Twitter users for indexing, referring, information retrieval, establishing relationships with particular communities, and many other functions (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Jackson & Welles, 2015; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). When diffusing the information about social movements, social media users tend to use hashtags to spread information. In the Women’s March, #womensmarch and #womenempowerment were used for retrieving more online discussion. The study focused on the first Women’s March on D.C. and selected the time range of January 15, 2017 to February 15, 2017 as the study period. This period was selected because it was reported to be the most active period for the Women’s March in the past two years (Gayles, 2018). According to Salesforce Social Studio, more than 8 million tweets in this time period discussed Women’s March. The researcher used *free Twitter API* to gather

data but it had a limit: each *request window* is 15 minutes and allows 900 requests. Given the consideration of research parsimony, a total of 50,000 tweets were randomly sampled to analyze the social movement features. Because of the random sampling process, the data is still generalizable.

For the Black Lives Matter movement, hashtags (e.g., #blackexcellence, #blacklivesmatter, #blacktwitter, #blacktwittermoment) were used for searching the movement relevant tweets during July 5-17, 2016. On July 5 and July, 17, 2016, Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Philando Castile in Saint Paul, Minnesota were fatally shot by police officers. On July 7, 2016, a shooter killed five police officers in Dallas, Texas, and on July 17, 2016, another shooter attacked law enforcement in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Anderson, & Hitlin, 2016). The period was selected based on Pew Research Center's research. According to Pew Research Center, from July 2013 through May 1, 2018, the hashtag #blacklivesmatter has been used for nearly 30 million times on Twitter. The week of July 5-17, 2016 was a highly active period during the past three years regarding the discussion of the Black Lives Matter social movement (Anderson, Toor, Rainie, & Smith, 2018). It was also the time when discussions about Black Lives Matter, law enforcement, and the conflicts between the police and African-Americans reached a peak. According to Salesforce Social Studio, more than 4.2 million tweets in this period discussed Black Lives Matter. A total of 50,000 tweets were randomly sampled to analyze the social movement features.

For the social media discussion on the Knox Blue Dots, @KnoxBlueDots and “Knox Blue Dots” were used in data collection on Twitter. From October 18, 2017 (the first post of the Knox Blue Dots on Twitter) to March 14, 2019, 1304 tweets contained @KnoxBlueDots or

“Knox Blue Dots” in their tweets, retweets, or quote retweets and all 1304 tweets were used for social network analysis.

Overall, to answer the research question, for the Women’s March and the Black Lives Matter movement, a total of 50,000 tweets were randomly selected from each national level movements for analysis. For the local level movement, Knox Blue Dots, all the tweets (a total of 1304 tweets) that mentioned the Knox Blue Dots were examined in this research.

Networks are not only established social media in the virtual environment but in real life. The researcher wanted to understand how individuals in their local communities have created their interpersonal networks and how the interpersonal networks have contributed to social movement engagement and social capital. In the next section, a survey dataset of Knox Blue Dots sought to examine social movement engagement from a small group perspective.

Ego Network Survey Data Collection and Analysis

Why Ego Network Analysis?

Social network studies have also been criticized for being overly descriptive and lacking of theoretical contribution (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). To fill in the weaknesses of quantitative based social network analysis method, an in-depth interview and qualitative-based social network analysis was used to deepen the understanding of social movement engagement.

A *sociogram* is formed when individual actors’ lists are combined (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007). In the other words, a sociogram represents the choices and strength of choices of each actor and the sociogram discloses every individual and the interrelations of individuals regarding the research topic (Freeman, 2000). The basic assumption of this method is that actors in a network are dependent on each other and information flows among the interdependent network. In this dissertation, the purpose of applying the qualitative based social network

analysis is to understand a “nominalist perspective on social reality” (Laumann, Marsden, & Prensky, 1989, p. 66). The boundaries of the network are determined by the researchers’ network questions, such as who did you talk with before you engaged in the movements or who do you seek help from. The sampling technique in the qualitative based social network analysis is *snowball sampling*. In this procedure, the dissertation initially starts with one or two individual activists (referred to as “egos”), then the egos named the other individual activists or publics (referred to as “alters”) with whom they had connections in social movements. Then a list of individual activists were generated to report both the ego-alter connections and the alter-alter connections (Hogan et al., 2007). In this study, social movement engagement is the criterion for the boundary delimitation. Before inviting interviewees to the research, I asked them two questions—if they participated in collective actions offline and engaged in social movement relevant discussion online. If they meet both of criteria, the interviewees were selected. I also asked participants’ ethnicity, age, gender, geographic location, and membership with any communities to answer RQ3c. To create a sociogram of a network, Chua, Madej, and Wellman (2011) summarized two qualitative-based social network approaches for data collection:

First, the *personal network approach*. With this approach, the name generating starts with from an individual’s (ego) standpoint, then the entire network expands from one ego to his or her ties with alters. “The scope condition applies to everyone in the network” (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007, p. 118). This approach is also called the “*Wellman approach*.” With this approach, the researcher asks a participant to recall something within a defined scope of conditions (Hogan et al., 2007). In the social movement network, the researcher may ask the participant to answer the following questions: name all the people you had interpersonal

conversation/digital communication with during the last week, name those you are close with, or name those with whom you discuss important matters regarding the social movement.

Second, “whole network” approach. With this approach, researchers observe an entire set of ties, such as in a neighborhood, workplace, or organization. This approach is named the “Fischer approach.” Through different questions, the researcher was able to identify different supportive alters (relationships).

In the dissertation, the “Fischer approach” was adopted to define a range of supportive alters in social movement network. To generate the supportive alters in social movement engagement, each respondent in the ego network survey identified the people who they interacted the most in the social movement.

Through the “Fischer approach,” the researcher collected a list of individuals. For each individual in the list, I asked some questions about the social relations of the participants and the people that are identified by them. In doing so, I can explore how social relations impact the formation of social movement networks.

Once the alters have been identified by the researcher, three question types can be taken to elicit answers about each alter:

Per-network questions: The same question is repeated for each person before going on to the next question.

Per-alter questions: For a set of challenging questions (such as communication frequency by media), it is easier to focus on the overall relationship to a single alter before moving to the next person.

Per-dyad questions: A dyad refers to two network members and the possible relation between them (pp. 118-119).

Among the three ways, the researcher has chosen the first option: per-network questions. With this approach, the researcher asked the respondent to describe their interpersonal networks in the social movement (i.e., who is connected to whom and how strong or weak the connection is). Through this process, a social movement network with individuals could be identified. Once personal network data is collected, I analyzed the key influencers in the social movement network (RQ3a) and the network structure (RQ3b).

Individuals' social ties have been considered as an important factor in social networks. Social ties have multiple types, including co-occurrences (e.g., the similarities of actors' locations, memberships, and attributes), social relations (actors have been connected through kinship, other social roles, affective, and cognitive relations), interactions, and flows (Borgatti et al., 2018). In this study, RQ3c was used to explore how group member similarities contribute to the production of social capital.

Sampling Process of the Ego Network Survey

The judgmental sampling technique was applied for the sampling process of the ego network survey. The participants of the ego network survey should be active members of Knox Blue Dots who have participated in Knox Blue Dots' activities (e.g., book club, meeting, social events, postcard writing, Facebook group interactivities) in the past six months. The survey link was posted in the Knox Blue Dots Facebook Group. The researcher also sent out emails and texts to the interview participants who were included in the previous in-depth interviews. The survey participants were also encouraged to share the survey link with their friends who were also Knox Blue Dots members. The ego network survey data was collected from May 18 to June 5, 2019.

Demographic Information of Ego Network Survey

Knox Blue Dots is a local a community of left-leaning people that started from a Facebook group. The Facebook group was created on February 10, 2017. As of June 8th, 2019, Knox Blue Dots Facebook page had a total of 833 members as a closed group. However, not everyone in the Facebook group was active. The founder of Knox Blue Dots said in the in-depth, “in terms of main leader (of Knox Blue Dots), I would say there are 10.” The active members of the group were about 50-100.

A total of 23 participants filled out the survey. Among 23 respondents, two respondents did not identify themselves as active members of Knox Blue Dots, and four respondents did not complete more than 50% of survey questions, so these six respondents were removed from the dataset. A total of 17 valid samples were remained for data analysis. Two respondents among 17 did not answer the demographic questions. Among the 15 respondents who answered the demographic questions, the majority of respondents were females ($n = 12$, 80%), 20% were males ($n = 3$). For the 15 respondents who answered the demographic questions, all of were Caucasian/White ($n = 15$) and all of them recognized themselves as Democrats ($n = 15$). The average age of 15 respondents was 58.93 ($SD = 15.27$). Their ages ranged from 37 to 85 years old. As for the highest level of education completed, the majority of participants had a graduate or professional degree ($n = 8$, 47.1%), followed by Bachelor’s degree ($n = 5$, 29.4%), and some college ($n = 2$, 11.8%). As for the household income, the majority of respondents had \$75,000 or more household income ($n = 12$, 70.6%), two respondents had \$25,000 to \$49,000 household income ($n = 2$, 11.8%), and one respondent had \$50,000 to \$79,000 household income (5.9%).

Scale Validity

A total of 8 items were applied as the measures of social capital in the ego network survey (Williams, 2006). Scale items included: 1) Interacting with people in Knox Blue Dots makes me feel connected to the bigger picture; 2) Interacting with people in Knox Blue Dots makes me interested in things that happen outside of my community; 3) Interacting with people within Knox Blue Dots makes me feel like a part of a larger social community; 4) Interacting with people within Knox Blue Dots makes me want to try new things; 5) There are several people in Knox Blue Dots I trust to help me solve my problems; 6) There is someone in Knox Blue Dots I can turn to for advice about making very important decisions; 7) If I needed help in an emergency, I know someone in Knox Blue Dots I can turn to; and 8) When I feel lonely, there are several people in Knox Blue Dots I can talk to. The Cronbach's α for the 8 items was 0.91.

A total of 11 items were used as the measures of higher-tier societal engagement. Scale items included: 1) I had more social awareness on a variety of social issues; 2) I am more aware of fighting for my benefits, rights, and interests in society; 3) I am more aware of other people's benefits, rights, and interests in society; 4) I am more aware of diversity in society; 5) I try to align my personal activist goals with the shared goals of Knox Blue Dots; 6) I feel rewarded personally; 7) I feel it is rewarded to achieve the group's collective goals; 8) I feel I have contributed to the well-being of society; 9) I do not think the other group members and I have sufficient collective actions, shared knowledge, or emotional connections in my movement (reversed); 10) I have not seen immediate improvements in the quality of life of my community or my social activist group after my participation (reversed); and 11) After a period of time, I have not seen any significant impacts or changes of Knox Blue Dots in my community or society

(reversed). The Cronbach's α for the 11 items was 0.87. Removing the first item ("I had more social awareness on a variety of social issues") could increase the Cronbach's α to 0.90.

I looked for Knox Blue Dots' participants' similarities in three aspects: 1) members shared membership or attending events; 2) members' similarities in understandings of social issues; and 3) members' similarities in gender, education, political preference, and income.

The above three types of similarities were examined as independent variables in the research, while social capital and higher-tier societal engagement were considered as the dependent variables. Multiple Regression Quadratic Assignment Procedures (MR-QAP) was applied to examine the relationships between the independent matrices and the dependent network matrices.

The Knox Blue Dots dataset helped us understand how individual similarities have contributed to the establishment of social groups and have facilitated social movement engagement. The Knox Blue Dots dataset provides an insight on a local social movement group and the establishment of interpersonal relationships. This research also aims at testing for all the social movements, what are the relationships among three levels of social movement engagement and the outcomes of social movements from a holistic perspective.

In the next section, the all movements' survey will be used to test the operationalization of three levels of social movement engagement.

All Movements' Survey Data Collection and Survey Method

To test the operationalization of social movement engagement, the third step of the dissertation is to use the survey method to test the social movement engagement measurements. A survey instrument is a set of questions and response options. Developing a valid and reliable

measurement of concepts reduces measurement error in research. The field of public relations does not have reliable measures of engagement. The survey is attached in **Appendix B**.

Sampling Process of the All Movements' Survey

From a holistic view, a survey of 600 samples was used to examine the relationships among three levels of social movement engagement (i.e., informational engagement, relational engagement, and societal engagement) and social capital. The dataset from the holistic perspective aims at testing the hypothesized social movement engagement model and the operationalization of social movement engagement relevant variables. From a small group perspective, the Knox Blue Dots' members were invited to fill out another survey. The second survey dataset aims at exploring how group members' similarities and social ties contribute to their social movement engagement and social capital.

The all movements' survey research asked people about their levels of activism, the type of movement in which they participated, the length of social movement engagement, the reasons for leaving social movements, how they engaged in the three levels of social movement engagement, and the social capital they achieved in the process of social movement engagement.

Main Research Demographic Information

Among all the respondents, 51.6% were male respondents ($n = 308$), 47.2% were females ($n = 282$), 0.3% ($n = 2$) were transgender or other, and 0.8% respondents selected "prefer not to answer" ($n = 5$). As for the ethnicity, the majority of participants were White/Caucasians (74%, $n = 442$), followed by Black or African American (8.9%, $n = 53$), Asian (7.9%, $n = 47$), Hispanic/Latino (6.5%, $n = 39$), Other (2%, $n = 12$), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.3%, $n = 2$), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.3%, $n = 2$). For the education levels of respondents, half of them had a Bachelor's degree (49.1%, $n = 293$), followed by some college

but no degree (19.3 %, $n = 115$), Associate degree in college (12.1%, $n = 72$), Master's degree (9.9%, $n = 59$), Professional degree (1.7%, $n = 10$), Doctoral degree (1.2%, $n = 7$), and high school graduate (0.7%, $n = 4$). The majority of respondents lived in a suburban setting (43%, $n = 257$), followed by urban areas (35%, $n = 209$), small town/rural areas (12.9%, $n = 77$), and large towns (9.0%, $n = 54$). Among all the respondents, the majority reported being Democrats (51.9%, $n = 310$), followed by Independent (27.1%, $n = 162$), Republicans (17.6 %, $n = 105$), no preference (2.3%, $n = 14$), and other (1%, $n = 6$).

Measures

In the all movements survey section, social movement engagement will be measured with three dimensions: informational engagement, relational engagement, and behavioral engagement.

I will examine the following six hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Societal engagement, relational engagement, offline informational engagement and online informational engagement positively influences bonding social capital.

Hypothesis 2a: Relational engagement positively influences societal engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Offline informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.

Hypothesis 4a: Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and societal engagement.

Hypothesis 5: Social movement participants who have higher societal level social movement engagement (5a), higher mid-level relational social movement engagement (5b), higher offline informational engagement (5c), and higher online informational engagement (5d) would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.

Hypothesis 6: For different types of social movements, individuals have different willingness to participate in future social movement activities.

The following variables and measures were included in the all movements' survey.

Types of Social Movements

To understand the types of social movements joined, the survey divided social movements into 10 types: anti-war movement, religious movement, environmental movement, feminism/women's rights movement, labor movement, LGBTQ movement, patriot movement, political progressive movement relevant, racial identity relevant movement, and other.

Level of Activism Measures

The level of activism measure was adopted from Tindall (2002) and Tindall, Cormier, and Diani (2012). A total of 11 items was used to measure how many types of social movement activities individuals participated in while engaged in their social movements. The items included: 1) I donated money to my social movement organization/group; 2) I wrote a letter to government officials, companies, or organizations regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports; 3) I signed a petition to support my social movement organization/group; 4) I attended a community meeting that organized by my social movement organization/group; 5) I attended a rally or a protest demonstration to support my social movement/organization/group; 6) I participated in an information campaign about the issues that my social movement organization/group supports; 7) I made a presentation and/or gave a lecture on issues that my social movement organization/group supports; 8) I participated in news conferences/media relations activities regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports; 9) I served as a representative on an advisory board regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports; 10) I purchased a book, t-shirt,

poster, mug or other merchandise from my social movement organization/group; and 11) other activities, please specify.

Length of Membership

The survey question, when did you stop participating in your social movement?, was included in the survey to measure respondents' length of membership.

Interpersonal Interactions

This concept examined whom did participants talk to about social movements. This measure helps us to understand who do social movement participants talk to in their everyday interpersonal interactions. The individuals whom did the social movement participants talked to (e.g., friends, coworkers/colleagues, family, members in their social movement groups, and people with opposing views) about their social movements were measured with the “daily” “weekly” “monthly” “yearly” and “never”.

Lower-tier Informational Engagement Measures

Lower-tier informational engagement of social movements was examined through two types: First, to measure *online informational* engagement, the survey asked about passive informational consumption behaviors in social media (i.e., gaining information about social movements from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat), as well as some proactive information engagement (i.e., like, share, comment, emotional reactions, Men et al., 2018).

Second, *offline informational engagement* items, such as, using texts, phone calls, face-to-face conversations, door-to-door recruitment, distributed flyers and booklets, and group meeting/group social, were used to measure offline informational engagement. The frequencies

of offline engagement were measured with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “daily” “weekly” “monthly” “yearly” to “never” (Pichler & Wallace, 2008).

Mid-tier Relational Engagement Measures

Mid-tier relational engagement provides an explanation on how interpersonal relationships have been created during the social movement engagement process. A total of 7 items were used to measure mid-tier engagement. Seven points Likert scales were used. Scale items included: 1) I had personal conversations with other participants in my social movement outside of the activist activities (dialogue); 2) My opinions were heard by other participants in my social movement (voice); 3) I trusted other participants in my social movement (trust); 4) I had reciprocal relationships with other participants in my social movement (reciprocity); 5) I was satisfied with my relationships with other participants in my social movement (satisfaction); 6) I felt emotional closeness (e.g., sharing of personal feelings, caring, affirmation, and accompanied by expectations of understanding) with other participants in my social movement (Emotional closeness in the relationship); and 7) I was likely to maintain long-term relationships with other participants in my social movement (Long-term relationships). In the main research, after testing the model, item #6 and item #7 were dropped because of low loadings. Cronbach’s α for this variable was .87.

Higher-tier Societal Engagement Measures

The higher-tier societal engagement was used to examine “action and impact at a social level of analysis” (Johnston & Taylor, 2018, p. 6). A total of 11 items were used in the survey to measure higher-tier engagement. The items were adopted from the literature of Heath (2018) and Johnston, Lane, Hurst, & Beatson (2018). Seven points Likert scales were used. Scale items included: 1) I had more social awareness on a variety of social issues; 2) I was more aware of

fighting for my benefits, rights, and interests in society; 3) I was more aware of other people's benefits, rights, and interests in society; 4) I was more aware of diversity in society; 5) I tried to align my personal activist goals with the shared goals of my social movement; 6) I felt rewarded personally; 7) I felt rewarded to achieve the group's collective goals; 8) I felt have contributed the well-being of society; 9) I did not think the other group members and I have sufficient collective actions, shared knowledge, or emotional connections in my movement (reversed); 10) I have not seen immediate improvements in the quality of life of my community or my social activist group after my participation (reversed); 11) After a period of time, I have not seen any significant impacts or changes in social movement/activist group in society (reversed).

Social Capital Measures

Social capital is considered as an endogenous variable in the study that is created as an outcome of three levels of social movement engagement. The social capital scale items were adopted from Williams (2006). In Williams' (2006) research, a total of 20 items were applied to measure "social capital" including 10 bonding subscale questions and 10 bridging subscale questions. Research in this study selected four items from the bonding subscale and four items from the bridging subscale that had the highest factor loadings in Williams' (2006) research. A total of eight items were used to measure "social capital." Scale items included: 1) Interacting with people in my movement/activist group made me feel connected to the bigger picture; 2) Interacting with people in my movement/activist group made me interested in things that happen outside of my community; 3) Interacting with people within my movement/activist group made me feel like a part of a larger social community; 4) Interacting with people within my movement/activist group made me want to try new things; 5) There were several people in my movement/activist group I trust to help me solve my problems; 6) There was someone in my

movement/activist group I can turn to for advice about making very important decisions; 7) If I needed help in an emergency, I knew someone in my movement/activist group I can turn to; and 8) When I felt lonely, there were people in my movement/activist group I can talk to. The first four items were bridging dimension of social capital. The Cronbach's α of the bridging dimension of social capital was 0.87. The last four items were the bonding dimension of social capital. The Cronbach's α bonding social capital was 0.90.

Willingness to Participate in Future Social Movement

The researcher was interested in exploring how many people in different social movements would like to continue engaging in their movements in the future. The categories of yes, no, and unsure were used for this question.

Reason for Leaving Social Movements

The study also explored for different social movement participants, what and the reasons for them to give up some social movements. For the respondents who selected "no" in the survey, "In the long term, will you continue involving in your social movement in the future," the research examined the reasons for respondents to leave social movements. A total of 7 items were used. Scale items included: 1) I am busy with my family and work; 2) I am no longer interested in the social movement; 3) I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities; 4) The goals of my social movement were vague; 5) The goals of my social movement have changed; 6) I do not like the people who were; and 7) other, please specify.

Reasons for Feeling Uncertain about Engaging in Future Social Movements

For the respondents who selected "unsure" for continue involving in your social movement in the future, the research examined the reasons to preventing people from engaging in their social movements. A total of 7 items were used. Scale items included: 1) I am busy with

my family and work; 2) I am no longer interested in the social movement; 3) I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities; 4) The goals of my social movement were vague; 5) The goals of my social movement have changed; 6) I do not like the people who were; and 7) other.

The next section will provide a summary of the mixed methods research design.

Summary of Mixed Research Methods

In summary, the dissertation used mixed methods for the research design, including in-depth interviews, qualitative-based social network analysis, quantitative-based social network analysis, and survey.

The in-depth interview method will be applied to understand (1) how do individual activists serve as co-creators of meanings in online and offline contexts (RQ1) and (2) what are the motivations and outcomes for individual activists to engage in social movements (RQ2a and RQ2b).

The qualitative-based social network analysis will be used to generate participant-aided sociograms which indicate the choices and strength of choices of each activist regarding the information flow and interpersonal interactions in the social movement process. The sociogram discloses the interpersonal relationships in social movements. The ego network analysis will be used to explore who are the social mediators in the social movement networks (RQ3a), What network structure does the social movement organization have (RQ3b), how did group member similarities contribute to the production of social capital.

At the whole-network level, to go deeper into the holistic networks of social movements, I will use the social media data from Salesforce Social Studio to examine the properties of social movements at the macro level (RQ4).

The survey research method is crucial for operationalizing social movement engagement, motivations, and outcomes for social movements in public relations scholarship. Previously, only informational engagement was widely examined in the public relations field. Relational engagement and behavioral engagement were not included as a part of engagement's operationalization. The survey method will test the validity and reliability of the operationalization of the concept of social movement engagement from three dimensions: informational social movement engagement, relational social movement engagement, and behavioral social movement engagement, how three levels of social movement engagement impact the production of social capital (H1, H2, H3, and H4), the relationships among individuals' willingness of future social movement participation and three types of social movement engagement (H5), and the relationship between social movement type and willingness of future movement engagement (H6). The survey research method will contribute to the development of engagement theory from a co-creational perspective.

In Chapter four, the results of the mixed methods research will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Qualitative Research Results

Meaning Co-creation during Social Movements

RQ1 explores how individual activists co-created meanings during social movements. For the Women's March, participants believed that the movement had multiple purposes and the meanings attached to the movement have evolved over time.

The meaning co-creation of the Women's March was established in the following three ways: 1) direct trigger: reaction to the presidential election, 2) movement attribute: support for women's rights and celebration of women's achievement, and 3) profound concern for causes: reactions to other social problems. Each theme was developed below. A summary of all the themes of two social movements is shown in **Table 4.1**.

Women's March Meaning Co-creation

Direct trigger: Reaction to the presidential election. The majority of interviewees believed that the Women's March was a reactive movement after the 2016 presidential election. They believed that dissatisfaction about the election results was the main reason for the Women's March. Two sub-themes emerged from under this theme: 1) reaction to Trump and 2) reaction to Clinton.

Some participants expressed their dissatisfaction towards Trump and Trump's comments about women. Participant A said "Women's March was started after the 2016 election. It was apparent to me that too many people thought the administration that was racist, anti-women, and anti-immigrant." Both Participant I and Participant J felt that President Trump did not represent women's values. Participant I noted that the presence of women in the march was to show their attitudes against the election result. She said,

“I think the main thing was that he (Trump) did not represent women of the United States. You know, you remember that thing that came out that he had said that Billy Bush guy on the TV show what he had said about women so that that was already out and I'm just the kind of person he was. It was just like; he was going to make changes in abortion issues and anything that had anything to do with women. He did not represent us. So I was not going just to sit by and not do something or say something. I think the main thing was I think most of the women there, they felt that he was not our president. He was not presidential and acting like a president of women of the United States. I think he did not represent our values” (Participant I).

Participant J said “for me, it was standing up against what I perceived as our new presidents, absolute disdain of the value of women. I really was marching against his points of view. A lot of my friends and I were saying, don't you dare think that you have a corner on the belief system of this nation? The kinds of things that were coming out of his (Trump's) behavior and his mouth. We (citizens of the U.S.) are just deplorable.”

The others talked about their disappointment about Hillary Clinton's poor performance during the presidential campaign. Participant I expressed her dissatisfaction of the whole presidential election process, particularly about how disappointed she felt about Clinton's failure in the presidential election. She said “I was also angry at her (Hillary Clinton) for the way she ran her campaign. She basically let him (Donald Trump) in. So it was not that I was just angry with him. I was angry with the whole process and the fact that somebody like this could be elected president. As time's going on, then you find out all again social media. You find out what Facebook was doing, how they were manipulating Facebook for this and all the other things that they did. It is actually scary.”

Participant G also expressed her disappointment about the 2016 presidential election. She said, “I was a strong supporter of Hillary Clinton for president and I supported that in terms of helping to raise money for her campaign and helping to spread the word about her positions on issues and voting for her. And then when she lost, I also was asked to write an article for European and Spanish world to understand, try to help them understand why she lost and how that happened. And so I have written and published about that issue as well... It almost looked like we were going to have the first woman elected president. It would be wonderful if that happens before I die...and I find it is very frustrating that around the world when you look around the world. There are many other countries where women have been leaders and multiple times, not just once, but multiple times.” Her participation in the local Women’s March was a reactive action for Hillary’s failure in the election.

Movement attribute: Support for women’s rights and celebration of women’s achievement. Participants believed that engaging in the Women’s March was to show the power of women, to fight for women’s rights, and to celebrate for the accomplishments of women.

Participant H also believed the Women’s March was to show the power of women and support women’s rights. She said “it is to show the power that women have. We stick together and we have a real impact...Many people were down there because they were so dissatisfied with Trump and his disrespect for women. I think for many people that had a lot to do with it too, but mine was really just to be down there to show support for women’s rights. Everybody was amazed that these women pull these all together and got such a huge response.”

Participant C also said, “at the beginning of the Women's March, the goal was simply to stand up for women's rights because we anticipated that a Trump administration would be chipping away, everything from abortion rights to equal pay to childcare, to healthcare, um, all

those things. So it was really promoted not as an anti-Trump demonstration, as a pro-women demonstration.” Participant D also shared similar opinion as Participant C. She said, attending to the local Women’s March was an action to support women’s rights. “I stood for people or stood with people who wanted women to have freedoms and rights” (Participant D).

Participant A described the local Women’s March in Knoxville as celebrating women’s achievements. “We’re encouraging people to stay positive the whole time because our message was we’re celebrating women celebrating the accomplishments of women and the power of women... we pushed out officially it was celebratory... look what women can do” (Participant A).

Profound concern for the movement causes: Reactions to other social problems. In interviews, participants mentioned socio-political problems that were related to the emergence of the Women’s March, such as health issue, criminal justice, human rights, and many others. Many participants believed that the objectives of the Women’s March have evolved overtime.

Participant B said, “I think it’s become sort of a rolling objective and goal.” She also shared that as a leader of the local Women’s March, they changed their objectives of the organization after the first march. She said, the local Women’s March also supported the activities of Moms Demand Action for gun control issue and supported immigrant problems.

Participant A said, people from different groups, including “women from different faith communities, from the Jewish community, from the Muslim community, from the Christian community, African American women,” involved in the local Women’s March to speak out their distress and their concerns. “People brought their own issues to march. So whether it was support for reproductive health or criminal justice reform or mainly a lot of indirect response to the immigration, and about the president” (Participant A).

Participant F believed that the Women's March had multiple purposes, such as political reasons and human rights. She said, "it is a place, a platform that is able to come together with our own separate things. So I do not know if that was the objective. I know that there was sisterhood and let us stand up for our rights and those kinds of things ... it was political or mostly about human rights."

Participant C also perceived the changes in the objectives of Women's March. She thought the Women's March should be renamed. She believed that the current activities of Women's March did not reflect the "women" component in it, but more about socio-political issues. "We are in fact we have that conversation here locally. There was a women's march in January and there was quite a conversation about renaming it because people do, not many people do not wish to be associated with the national leadership of the Women's March anymore."

In summary, during the interviews, three themes emerged from Women's March transcripts: the direct trigger (reaction to the presidential election), movement attribute (support for women's rights and celebration of women's achievement), and the profound concern for causes (reactions to other social problems).

The meaning co-creation of the Knox Blue Dots was established in the following three ways: 1) direct trigger: reaction to the presidential election, 2) movement attribute: aimed at creating a group with likeminded people, and 3) profound concern for causes: reactions to other social problems. Each theme was developed below.

Knox Blue Dots: Meaning Co-creation

Direct trigger: Reaction to the presidential election. The Knox Blue Dots members agreed that the activist group was created as a reaction to the 2016 election.

Participant N was the founder of the Knox Blue Dots. She said the establishment of the activist group was a reaction to the 2016 presidential election.

“After the election in 2016, I went to the women at first Women's March in 2017. I realized that there was a larger population of left leaning, liberal, and Democratic people here. And I didn't know that. I thought I live in Farragut, and I thought I was the only one who had those political beliefs because it's less usual. I think lots of people who are Democrats don't talk about it because we are minorities. So after the Women's March, I kind of knew there were liberal people here in the area, but I did not know them personally. So I got on the Women's March Facebook page and I posted that who I was and that I was looking for some likeminded friends and I got 500 responses... I organized them into regions and then I put them all into separate messaging group. I told them, these are the other women who are in your area. If we can have one person be an organizer for your area, then you can start meeting up and getting together. And then I had eight regional groups. I just decided randomly to call us the Knox Blue Dots. That's how we started” (Participant N).

Participant O was a member of the Knox Blue Dots. She also felt the Knox Blue Dots was an outcome of the presidential election. She said, “the Knox Blue Dots was started after the 2016 election and I was there at the first meeting and just fully supported everything that they (the Knox Blue Dots) were doing.” She also said, “It (the Knox Blue Dots) was like *a support group*, especially at a time when I think November through January, a lot of people were upset with the results of 2016. They went into hiding. They just couldn't cope. They just really wanted to be with other people, other likeminded people that thought like them. And they were some very dark couple months.”

Movement attribute: Create a group with likeminded people. The Knox Blue Dots' members understood the organization as a community that consists of individuals who support Democrats in east Tennessee and want to make changes.

Participant R felt that the Knox Blue Dots' objective was to "gather likeminded people together. And we have a support system because we're in small numbers here in east Tennessee. So it is nice to have likeminded people and then also to do what we can do to make the changes."

Participant S also felt the same way. She described the objective of the Knox Blue Dots as creating a group for likeminded individuals. She said, "I would say that it (the Knox Blue Dots) is a community of likeminded individuals and, a group that tries to create connections among people in Knoxville that are Democrats or at least lean Democrats. It provides a community for likeminded individuals."

Profound concern for causes: Reactions to other social issues. The existence of the Knox Blue Dots was one outcome of the division of the red states and blue states in the U.S. additionally, to maintain the interactivities among members, the Knox Blue Dots arranged book clubs and updated posts on a variety of social issues on its Facebook page that the members cared about. The group members said, they also outreached to help other communities in Knoxville area including gun violence group, minority group, groups for voting rights and many more.

As Participant P said, "I think we have this whole thing about *blue states* and *red states*. When people hear that you are from Tennessee, they make an assumption that you think a certain way. I think one thing that the Blue Dot type of groups serve is to send the message that there are progressive groups in the red states. There are people who think differently than the majority in those states. It feels like you're acknowledged. There's actually a wonderful group of progressive

thinkers in this state. There's a lot of great stuff happening, and it's not all just rednecks. I suppose it to Blue Dot groups can help send that message.”

For gun violence prevention, almost all the interviewees of the Knox Blue Dots talked about Knox Blue Dots’ collaborations with the Moms Demand Actions. For example, Participant O said, “I know the Blue Dots partnered with Moms Demand Action and did a gun violence postcard writing to the state representatives after Parkland (shooting). And it was like one of the biggest events that we ever had.”

Summary

Overall, based on two social movements, themes in common include: 1) direct trigger: reaction to the presidential election, 2) movement attribute, and 3) profound concern for causes: reactions to other social problems. For the movement relevant cause, the Women’s March focused on women’s rights, while the Knox Blue Dots focuses on creating a community of likeminded people.

Motivations of Social Movement Engagement

Interaction and exchange are key components of the concept of engagement. Engagement is conceptualized as “an iterative, dynamic process, where participation, experience, and shared action emerge as central components of engagement. It is through interaction and exchange that meaning is co-created” (Johnston & Taylor, 2018, p. 3). In this section, the researcher tried to understand how meaning of social movement engagement was co-created through the participants of two social movements: Women’s March and the Knox Blue Dots.

RQ2a explores the motivations for publics to engage in social movements. The following four themes emerged from the Women’s March analysis: 1) self-level: follow personal value systems, 2) other-oriented: create positive impacts on others, 3) society-level: being presence,

taking a civic role, and making statements, 4) network-level: being involved in unity. Each theme answering RQ 2a is developed below.

Motivation of Women's March Engagement

Self-level: Follow personal value system. Personal value systems make a difference in how individuals evaluate information and how to make decisions (England, 1967). Intrinsic motivations and consistency between personal beliefs and social movements' advocated causes motivate individuals to engage in social movements. Some participants said their personal beliefs (e.g., humanism, equality, social justice, free speech, kindness, religious belief) drove them to engage in social movements.

Participant F believed that her personal values drove her to continuously engage in social movements. She wanted to help people who were suffering by presenting in different social movements. She said, "I am blessed and living a life that is blessed. But if I have that, it would be so unfair of me to not share it. So I need to share the blessings of understanding that I have gotten from doing the work that I needed to do to improve my life, improved my views and those kinds of things that I just want to share that with other people so I can help other people who may be suffering. I may not be able to fix things, but I can have an influence and that is important."

Participant G said she has been very politically active on social justice issues. She also had signs in her window that demonstrated her beliefs, such as her belief for all human beings deserve to be treated equally, her belief for free speech, and her belief in kindness. These beliefs made her feel motivated to engage in social movements, as well as supporting Yassin's Falafel House, a local restaurant that is operated by refugees and makes public statements about its commitment to diversity.

Some participants believed that their social movement engagement had a connection with their previous religious belief. “I think that probably goes back to my religious upbringing. I was brought up in a tradition that focused on social justice. I have tried to empower people. So even though I do not follow that religious tradition anymore, that's still part of my core values. I've just never been willing to sit back and watch. I want to make things better. I was raised in a Christian tradition. It still rings very true for me. People should be treated with respect” (Participant D). She believed that her personal values drove her to participate in diverse social movements. “The areas where I've done collective action, you know, the issues of social justice and, and women's rights in science and belief in the truth, those all relate back to that set of core values.”

Other-oriented: Create positive impacts on others. Many participants said they wanted to engage in social movements because they wanted to make positive impacts for their children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, and students.

Participant I said, she tried to create positive impacts on her children. “I think all my kids were influenced by it. They have quite an awareness of everything too.” Participant C believed that “I think one very powerful reason was I wanted to be able to say to my grandchildren that I had taken action. I had done something. It was just very personal to me. You know, one person more or less, probably wasn't going to make a difference there, but I wanted to be able to tell my kids and my grandchildren, I had stood up for women and for decent government.”

Participant G said she engaged in social movements but also tried to get her friends and family involved. “My daughter lives in Seattle and she went to the Women's March in DC. ... Some of them (my children) are more politically active than others, but they are all paying attention. Now I'm working on my granddaughters.” She also invited her neighbors to go

together with her. “I participated in this last year (2018) too when it was pouring rain and freezing cold out. A bunch of my neighbors, we drove together to go when they had an overage.” Participant G was also a professor who taught social justice. She said she shared her social movement engagement experience in class and also asked students to participate in a social justice project for the course purpose. She said, “I just encouraged people to participate and let them know how the events are going on. That was part of my course to not just talk about social justice, but to actually work on it.”

Societal level: Being present, taking a civic role, and making statements. Many social movements seek to create the conditions for civil society. Civil society is about informed choice and enlightened action. “Civil society is about informed choice and enlightened action. Sometimes symbolic action is needed before the discourse becomes something that people can pay attention to” (Taylor, 2010, p. 8). Some social movements participants believed that their civic actions could make statements on socio-political issues that had impacts at the societal level.

Participants felt that they wanted to be actively present in the movement to show their support their civic roles as citizens of the United States. They considered their presence in social movements as a way to make such statements.

Participant E said people participated in the movement to show up. “I think the first year was just to really get people out and just to show up. Showing up is very important and it is very powerful... so just to show up and have a presence.” She believed that it is essential to keep bringing more people into the movement to make the movement forward. “The Women's March movement is working to keep people engaged and to bring in new people on board” (Participant E). Participant G also mentioned that she went there to participate and listened to the speakers and gave them encouragement and applauded. She walked with everybody up to the street with

her sign. “I just went down to the courthouse and be a visible presence to be supportive” (Participant G). Participant J also agreed that her contribution to the Women’s March was her presence. She said, “I believe a physical presence makes a difference. I believe it affirms for the other people who we were there to support. And I think it gives a message to all the people who cannot.”

Engaging in social movements was seen as a way to take the civic role. “I believe that more people need to step up, come out of their private lives, get into public life, and take on a civic role, whether it's, you know, city council, county commission, run for mayor and for governor” (Participant A).

Participant D said, she just wanted to “physically with other likeminded people making, making a statement... I think at the time I remember feeling some pride that so many people, both men, and women older and younger had turned out to make this kind of a statement... I think it, um, made a statement that despite what the election outcome might have been, there were large numbers of people who felt very different than the views that were expressed by the president” (Participant D).

Network-level: Involving in unity. In social movements, individuals are mobilized to support or against a social cause. During the process of social movement engagement, various types of social networks, both interpersonal networks and interorganizational networks, are created. The networked civic engagement facilitates coordinate actions, reciprocity, and social trust (Diani, 1997).

At the network level, one of motivations to engage in social movement was to involve in a big event. Participants said they were impressed by how large the social movement was, wanted to be part of a huge event and did not want to be left out.

Participant D said she did not want to be left out. “It is a kind of a momentous thing that was happening, and I wanted to be a part of it.”

Participant I liked the power of unity. “I love unity. I love that we were all together. I felt this energy. I liked that (during the movement) one woman needed to sit down. Everybody just came to help, and we all were together helping her get her somewhere to sit. Checking in, “are you okay” and getting her water. We were all together in this thing. I loved the bond that we all shared.”

Participant B said she’d like to participate in the Women’s March because she would not like to feel regret when she is 95 and sitting in her rocking chair. She said that she wanted to be a part of something big in the society and would not want to regret missing this event that could shape history.

In summary, RQ2a explores the motivations for publics to engage in social movements. Four themes were identified from the Knox Blue Dots interviews: 1) other-oriented: educate local citizens, 2) society-level: supporting for a variety of issues, 3) network-level: building a local community with likeminded people.

Motivation of Knox Blue Dots Engagement

Other-oriented: Educate local citizens. The Knox Blue Dots members shared stories of their efforts to make local citizens become more familiar with political candidates and socio-political issues in the Knoxville area.

Participant Q said many local people lack information about political candidates. “What we saw after 2016 was there were so many people that were new to the political process. I mean, people would go vote, but they would either only vote for the candidates that they heard of primarily in a presidential election and knew very little about state and local politics.”

Participant R believed that many people in the country have not been well-informed and only have received information from limited or biased sources. She said, “I have a class reunion for my school this year and I am not going because there are not many people who believe like I believe and, and I think it is because they have not read a lot. Okay. What about history? They have not known. They have not met people from other countries. (They) have not met people do not look like them who have different experiences. So their world is very small and then they turn on the TV to Fox News and they hear it. It reinforces a lot of fear and that the world is a small place.” She felt that Knox Blue Dots aims at educating people. She said, “the goal is to get people educated on what's going on and get out there and try to make a difference and make the changes where we want them into.”

Society-level: Support for a variety of issues. The Knox Blue Dots interviewees all agreed that their movement supported a variety of social issues that the local community people care about, including getting candidates elected, voting rights, gun violence prevention, education issues, and many others. As Participant O said, “it was things like there was a need in the community where people are just looking for a leadership and a place where they can go and have their voices heard and feel that they're supported along the way. And that's really what Blue Dots is.”

Getting candidates elected was one main issues of the Knox Blue Dots. Participant S said she wanted to support the Democratic candidates with her social movement engagement. “I want people to know that there are Democrats here and it is not a totally Republican stronghold. And I want to support Democratic candidates and democratic” issues (Participant S).

As for the voting rights, the Knox Blue Dots members said they have helped increase voters in Knoxville. Participant O was involved in voter registration drives with the League of

Women Voters, particularly on college campuses. She said, “Tennessee ranks 50th in terms of people that actually vote. We had a huge percentage of people that were registered who did not vote. I’m completely in favor of federal registration and getting people access to information, letting people know when voting day is and how the process works. Not necessarily about candidates specific, but really just about exercising their right to vote.”

For the education issues, the Knox Blue Dots shared a variety of education information (e.g., Parent Teacher Association/PTA) on its Facebook page to get people informed. For example, Participant R said, she got the newest information that she did not know about the PTA from the Knox Blue Dots’ Facebook page and got informed about what should she do. Participant O also said, the Knox Blue Dots shared information about some bills on education, such as the two bills about the Charter schools and vouchers programs.

Network-level: Build a local community with likeminded people. The Knox Blue Dots participants were motivated to build a community with a group of progressive and liberal people while living in a conservative state. Many members of the organization were motivated to participate in the movement because of what they perceived to be the dedicated and smart people in the group.

For the Knox Blue Dots, the political motivation was central to members. Members in the Knox Blue Dots wanted to find the likeminded people who supported Democratic candidates. Participant S said she wanted to help the community of Democratic people in East Tennessee by engaging in the Knox Blue Dots’ activities. “I want to support the democratic community here in Knoxville” (Participant S). Participant N also shared the similar viewpoints. She said, “Blue Dots is to build a community of left leaning people, so that we could educate and participate in local and state government and get Democrats elected.”

Participant O described the Knox Blue Dots as a “therapy group” and “support group” after the 2016 election and shared how the Knox Blue Dots was created after the 2016 election. She said,

“It (the Knox Blue Dots) was like *a support group*, especially at a time when I think November through January ... then the Women's March happened and, and it was like this new light, these new groups sprouted and gave people something positive to focus on. So that's what Blue Dots means to me... I think blue dots offers that opportunity to people. And so the more that we can garner awareness by showing what a supportive group we are. And it was almost like a *therapy group* at first because we are kind of feel isolated here and a big red state. I know for a long time I thought there's no one here that thinks like me about certain things. Then (Participant N) posted on Facebook through the Women's March. She said, does anyone live in Farragut? She got like 500 or something in 48 hours. It was astronomical. And so then she just started putting people in neighborhood clusters.”

For some members, the motivation for joining the group was to be part of a group of smart women. Participant Q believed the Knox Blue Dots is a group primarily with women. She described the women in the organization as “amazing, strong, and smart women.” She also praised the members as “so smart and have so much to give and so much to contribute.” She also said, “why wouldn't you want to be a part of that?”

In summary, three themes were identified from Knox Blue Dots analysis: 1) Other-oriented: Educating local citizens, 2) Society-level: Supporting for a variety of issues, 3) Network-level: Building a local community with likeminded people.

Overall, comparing the themes of the two movements, the motivations of social movement engagement both emphasized other-oriented motivations, society level motivations, and network level motivations. The Women's March has an additional theme of personal level motivation motivations of social movement engagement.

Outcomes of Social Movement Engagement

RQ2b explores the outcomes of social movement engagement. The outcomes of social movement engagement refer to the effects of movements at different levels. The following three themes emerged from the thematic analysis of Women's March: 1) individual level: personal development and emotional disappointment, 2) community and network level: find like-minded community, and 3) national level: create changes in political climate.

Outcomes of Women's March Engagement

Individual level outcomes: Personal development and disappointment. During the social movement engagement process, individuals may have different personal reward motives. Simon et al. (1998) claimed that individuals could have three types of positive rewards from social movements, including improvement of their living conditions, social contacts with others, and having meaningful activity to spend their leisure time, while some negative personal outcomes may also occur, including potential risks in health and loss of time. At the individual level, engaging in social movements facilitate some positive outcomes, such as personal development and helping individuals step out of their comfort zones to develop skills they did not have before. Yet, engaging in social movements may also bring about some negative emotions at the personal level, such as disappointment and frustration with the movement.

As Participant B said, "after that, I decided that doing these kinds of things (social movement activities) and getting me out of my comfort zone would be of huge benefit to me...

Previously, I didn't want to do TV interviews. I didn't want to try to explain to the masses, what we did and why we did it. And then that, well, I ended up tagging along with (another leader in the local Women's March) to several radio interviews and just kind of haphazardly jumping in, and she would say, you're good at this. You can do this. Those are things that are, they don't come overnight, and they don't come easily to me. It's something that I've had to build and get over that fear of looking out of the sea of people." For participant B, making herself engaged in local social movements was a chance for her to overcome the fears she had about TV interviews and talking in front of a large group of people.

Participant A also had the similar experience as Participant B. She felt more confident to be a leader and giving advice to people after organizing the local social movement. She said, "I had never done anything like organizing a march before, but what I realized is simply writing, doing something, you assume at least one year of leadership, I think you have to actually fill that role and continue to do it to be a leader. But I think people see me as a leader now. People come to me for advice, which is strange. You know, ask me questions about policies, what they can do. So that was both gratifying and humbling. But I think people do see me as a leader now. That's cool. What I did was raise my hand and say I'll do this. But once you do and you realize that it can help so many people. That's what keeps me in it. I think I do find value in what I'm doing and I think other people do too. That sounds amazing."

The researcher asked Participant A to elaborate more about which kind of advice people asked about. She said, "I have got people calling me and asked me who do I vote for? Because people don't take time. They don't spend all of their time on Twitter, obsessively reading like I read. So some people just want to say I like what you did. I think you are a good person. Tell me what you're voting for. And I'll do that too. So that was the weird thing when people came to me

for that.” By engaging in social movements, Participant A boosted her confidence and felt herself become more important in her network.

However, some participants in the Women’s March said they had some frustrating outcomes when participating in social movements. The process of social movement engagement was also time-consuming, which made them feel tired. Some participants had focused their activism on several socio-political issues, which made them feel hard to balance.

Participant B said, “I think we're all kind of frustrated by it. So I mean there, there are overwhelming positives overall, but there are negative things to that. And there honestly, these social justice movements will make you very, very tired. They're time-consuming. They'll eat your soul, you know, there's much negativity. You have to feel it. A lot of garbage, particularly on social media, answer lots of the same questions over and over again. It gets frustrating.”

Participant A also felt disappointed because she felt that Women’s March at the national level only had plans for the first 12 months. “It’s (the Women’s March) very loosely organized in my opinion. If we're speaking just about the march, the first 12 months that it was in existence, they had more coordination for the local groups. The national group would come up with a plan and I think they called it the hundred days of action. So, every 30 days they would announce a new action to take. This week, we want you to do X, Y, or Z. Another time, 30 days later, it would be a postcard drive. That (the instruction from the national Women’s March) has tapered off after that first 12 months. Now national doesn't have as much reach down. I don't think they're trying to operate like the head of a single organization. The local groups have a lot more autonomy to decide what they want to do and we are all behaving very differently.” As a leader in the Women’s March in Knoxville, Tennessee, she felt that she did not receive enough

instructions from the upper level about how to operate the activism locally, so she needed to do more decision-makings autonomously.

Participant C was an active individual activist of Women's March in Oregon. She also felt very disappointed when she perceived the changes in Women's March's objectives. After experiencing the discouraging situations in the local Women's March, Participant C made a transition to Indivisible, which she thought to have a better internal organization. The Indivisible was established in 2016. Indivisible's mission is to "cultivate a grassroots movement of literally thousands of local Indivisible groups to elect progressive leaders, realize bold progressive policies, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda" (Indivisible, n.d., para. 1). She said:

"It was devastating. Especially after the women's march and everyone came back to their local communities, very fired up to do all kinds of amazing work. The leadership at the top just disintegrated. And everything that we had worked for was dismissed. They stopped looking for input from the state leaders. I was in on conference call after conference call where we know we made our case to do a thing. What we wanted was just ignored. So it was the internal dissension tremendous, and it was very disheartening. The Indivisible people stepped in. We are stepping up anyway, and it was an easy transition for nearly everyone that I know to give up on the Women's March people and counted that (Indivisible) as a wonderful thing that we did and moved on to Indivisible. And that's a very active group here locally" (Participant C).

Participant J also transitioned from the Women's March to Indivisible. She praised the Indivisible group during the interview. "After that (Women's March), Indivisible group has been really politically active in our central Oregon."

Participant H also shared her concerns about the management issue of the Women's March and thought the first movement was better managed than the rest of the actions. She said, "it (the Women's March) just did not seem like it was managed well. There were groups around in different cities throughout the world and it does get good coverage, but it was not anything like that first one."

Participant E also shared her emotional sufferings during the interview. She said she had a full time job and also cared about multiple socio-economic issues. She felt struggling how to use her time for different things.

"I feel like I've been doing a lot but not really accomplishing anything. So I need to step back and figure out how I feel, which things could be the most useful. Um, so that's kind of where I am at right now and just trying to figure out what is going to be the most beneficial thing to do, where is the best place to use my time. I am stepping back and just making sure that I am being healthy with myself. Um, because if you cannot take care of yourself, you cannot take care of other people" (Participant E).

Community level: Find a like-minded community and create networks. At the community level, engaging in social movements creates an opportunity for individuals to find a group of people who have similar opinions.

Participant F said "I think the Women's March movement has helped me to realize that I am not as separate. I am just more expressive... That networking is important for what you do. No one should feel so alone and be doing everything on their own." Participant J has seen her female neighbors gathered together after the Women's March as a group. She said "they come to the Indivisible meetings and gatherings that we have. They are not afraid because they know there is other people out there. That was a huge thing. It was the most fabulous thing to know

now because we have social media that there were people in every country, there were women who had the courage and they might not have fixed everything. Maybe nothing changed for a lot of those very minor efforts.”

Participant J said, after participating in local activist activities, she found a “support system.” She also described the gatherings of local groups as “solidarity.”

National level: Create changes in the political climate. At the national level, individuals’ social movement engagement could facilitate changes in society and bring about more robust and vigorous political climate in the society. Moreover, the interviewees also have seen more female political candidates running for the local and state positions.

Participant D has perceived some changes in regards to female political leaders. “We have seen sound changes at the national level. For example, many women were selected to be in the important positions.” Participant H also perceived changes in more female political leaders. She said “obviously women just getting more powerful and running for office. It was momentum, and that was one of the things that helped kick it off.” Participant J have perceived some groups, such as Indivisible, have tried to help get certain candidates elected. She said she also participated in the process.

Participant J has seen the political climate changes in her local community. “A lot of women who never stepped forth came out at that time and all of a sudden realized how important it was that they participate. So I do think there has been a difference. I saw because of our Women's March, I met women in our tiny community. I never, ever had heard him speak politically before. And now I see them participating... I think it has brought an opportunity for young women. I mean high school girls and even middle school and elementary. You are seeing those young children staging protests and stepping up for things that they know happened to be

important. I believe because that March (the Women's March) reminded people that are more connected all over the world.”

In sum, the outcomes of Women's March social movement engagement had three aspects: individual, community and network level, and national level. The next section will address the outcomes of Knox Blue Dots' social movement engagement.

Outcomes of Knox Blue Dots Engagement

The following three themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the Knox Blue Dots. Themes included: 1) individual level outcomes: facilitate personal development, 2) network level outcome: cultivate long-lasting relationships for members, 3) community level: build a likeminded community, and 4) national level: get a better political climate.

Individual level outcomes: Facilitate personal development. Many of the Knox Blue Dots members have experienced personal development such as stepping out of their comfort zone and getting more involved in politics. During the local political campaigns, many participants have experienced disappointment with the election results. Knox Blue Dots has helped them cope.

Participant S said, with the social movement engagement, she was able to find the other side of her and did something that she never did before. “I am embracing getting out of my comfort zone and explore social activism in a way that I never would have before. I have ever done before in my life. I am definitely becoming more extrovert, so I have no problem talking to people. I'd never sort of gotten into issues or politics in that way. Being in Tennessee has really allowed me to explore that side of me and trying to step up in that social activism way.”

Participant Q shared her disappointed during the political campaigns and how the Knox Blue Dots members supported her. “There has been a lot of disappointments honestly, because I

campaigned a lot for a lot of people and nobody won. You know, that's disappointing. But we got to know that change takes a long time. So I think just having each other to hold on, you know, hold hands with and encourage each other. We have got to keep the fight going.”

Community and network level: Build a likeminded community and cultivating long-term relationships. One outcome of Knox Blue Dots members’ social movement engagement is the establishment of a community with like-minded people. The group members described the community as a support group. As mentioned above, the Knox Blue Dots has become a community for the people who have supported Democratic candidates in a Republican dominated state. Additionally, the Knox Blue Dots members and leaders have used various ways to embrace new members to join the community.

Participant S said that she was a newcomer in Knoxville. She tried to build a new village for herself. The Knox Blue Dots has supported her to build a new village. “You know, especially when you move someplace new. You have to really build your village. That was something really important to me when we moved to Knoxville. I was leaving a place that I have lived for 15 years and had built my village in New York. I was coming to Knoxville where I did not know anybody and I was going to have to rebuild my village. So things like Moms Demand Action and Knox Blue Dot have allowed me to create a village of, I mean mostly women honestly, but obviously there are men involved.”

Participant O said that she and other group members had “constant reach out and connect with new people. We find out about those people (new people) through our existing networks. Every one of us wears multiple hats. And so if we can look at my church, my kids’ soccer group, and my running group, we find ways to connect with those people and let them know that these

groups exist and opportunities within these groups. You know, it is just a way to build the movement.”

Members of the Knox Blue Dots have created new friendships within the social movement engagement. Through group socials and book clubs organized by the Knox Blue Dots, some long-term friendships have been cultivated. Additionally, the Knox Blue Dots have established some connections with other groups that support similar social issues, such as Moms Demand Actions, the Knoxville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Knoxville chapter of Indivisible, Women’s March, and many others.

Participant Q said the experience with the Knox Blue Dots facilitated her networking and cultivated friendships for her. She described the relationship with other members in the Knox Blue Dots as friends and sisters. “We are friends. We are sisters. We are activists together” (Participant Q).

Participant S moved from New York to Knoxville. She felt the relationship with other members in the Knox Blue Dots fulfilled her friendship needs. She said, “it has been really amazing just on a personal level getting to meet Participant N (Note: the researcher replaced the participant’s real name here), and I consider her a friend. That has been just really nice. You know, especially when you move someplace new.”

The other outcome of social movement engagement in the Knox Blue Dots was to collaborate with other groups. Participant N was one of the leaders in the Knox Blue Dots. She summarized the groups that collaborated the most with the Knox Blue Dots. She said the groups included “Indivisible East Tennessee, Women's March, the State Democratic Party, and a lot of district democratic groups.” She also shared that “women run all of these groups. We were going

to all the same events. I think once you get to know who the leaders are of the different groups, you bond over. You have similar experiences in terms of wanting to volunteer. And we all supported each other.” Participant N knew the focus of each team and have helped other teams in a variety of events. “Each group kind of specializes in different aspects of things. So I think we can collaborate to support, to get people to each other's events” (Participant N).

Additionally, the Knox Blue Dots had a close relationship with Moms Demand Actions on the gun violence prevention. Participant O said that the two activist groups worked on a gun violence postcard event together to reach out to state representatives after the Parkland shooting.

Participant Q said the Knox Blue Dots had some connections with the NAACP. She said, “I went to some of the NAACP meetings. It is about the affordable housing and in Knoxville, there's not affordable housing, so we have got to do better with that. It is just all connected.”

National level: Get a better political climate. One of the outcomes of social movement engagement was to create a better political climate and to achieve political changes. For the Knox Blue Dots, their actions have made people become more aware of local politics. Social movement engagement has outcomes in influencing local people on socio-political issues and has made people know more about local and national events. The local people include both citizens in general and families of the Knox Blue Dots’ members.

Participant R said her social movement engagement also influenced her family. One of the social movement engagement consequences was to educate her daughter. She said, “She (her daughter) has written postcards. She has helped drop postcards and she has been to some of the events where she has learned about some of the topics. You know, a lot of things are going on

and a lot of things 13 year olds do not understand and it is so important for her to understand what's going on now because it's going to affect her not only now, but possibly in the future.”

Participant O believed that they achieved small victories by getting more people involved in local politics. Participant O said, “we have a stronger group than we did two years ago. And I think Blue Dots offers that opportunity to people. And so the more that we can garner awareness by showing, you know, what a supportive group we are. Our book club is such an easy entry way for people who have never been involved in politics before or people who don't really know much about state and local politics. This is an easy entry point to come in and be surrounded with people that are in the same boat as you and learning together and then taking action eventually. That's one thing that we always say over and over again that these small victories. They are all important.”

Participant R believed that with the efforts of the Knox Blue Dots, the local Democratic candidates have become aware of the general people’s opinions in social issues. Participant R said, “I have been very pleased. I have knocked on doors for different candidates. I have made calls to express my opinion to my representatives. What I wanted them to do and what I don't want them to do... Our representatives in the past, especially like at the state and local level, never heard from anybody. So they sort of had free reign. Now people are much more aware. They (the representatives) feel some discomfort when they start to vote on something that's against the general people’s interest. I think that is important that they know people are born to know. From Twitter, from Facebook, we keep up with what is being voted on.”

In summary, for both the Women’s March and the Knox Blue Dots, the outcomes of social movement engagement included the following three aspects: 1) individual level: personal development and emotions, 2) community level: find like-minded community, and 3) national

level: changes in political climate. The Knox Blue Dots' social movement engagement had an extra outcome: network level outcome: cultivating long-lasting relationships for members. All the themes were shown in **Table 4.1**.

Understanding the meaning-making, motivations, and outcomes of social movement engagement can help social movement organizations prepare their narratives and build better organizations that may have higher member retention rates. In the next section, I will look into the whole network of three movements in regards to their online informational engagement.

The Whole-network Research Results

The whole network analysis sought to examine the lower-tier informational engagement in three social movements (i.e., Women's March, Black Lives Matter, and Knox Blue Dots), the social media network structures of the three movements, and the key social influencers in the three networks. Two networks were national and one was local. RQ4 explored what are the whole network-level characteristics for these three social movement networks. To answer RQ4, mention edges and retweet edges were used for data analysis.

The Whole Network of Women's March

The study examined a total of 50,000 tweets that contained keywords and hashtags such as women's march, #womensmarch, #womenempowerment, on Twitter from January 15, 2017 to February 15, 2017. For 50,000 tweets, 50,205 valid edges were identified, including 40,520 unique edges and 9685 edges with duplicates. A total of 33,802 valid nodes were analyzed. The maximum geodesic distance was 19 and the average *geodesic distance* was 5.50. Uysal and Yang (2013) noted that, "a geodesic distance is the most efficient path in terms of transmitting information" (p. 465). For the mention and retweet network of the Women's March, the average geodesic distance was 5.50, meaning on average the information diffusion passes through about

five Twitter users. Women's March (WM) had very low network density (0.000037). That means social media accounts in WM were loosely connected. The whole network-level of the Women's March's characteristics and network were shown in **Table 4.2**.

The top 20 *high in-degree nodes* in the network of the Women's March from January 15, 2017 to February 15, 2017 included Shireen Qudosi (@ShireenQudosi), Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Lil' Kim-berly Ms. G.O.A.T (@killerbee805), Scott Dworkin (@funder), Women's March (@womensmarch), The Hill (@thehill), Amy Mek (@AmyMek), Anika Zufelt (@anikaamarieeee), we're going to pass AVR (@SeanMcElwee), CNN (@CNN), Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton), YouTube (@YouTube), Jesse Williams (@iJesseWilliams), Michael Moore (@MMFlint), President Trump (@POTUS), Linda Sarsour (@lsarsour), Mark "Beto" Pantano (@TheMarkPantano), Nancy Pelosi (@SpeakerPelosi), ACLU (@ACLU), and Cecile Richards (@CecileRichards) (see Table 4.3).

For all the actors in the network of the Women's March from January 15, 2017 to February 15, 2017, the *eigenvector centralities* were less than 0.0005, which are a low level.

For this network, some mainstream media received many incoming ties, such as The Hill, CNN, and YouTube. The majority of in-degree nodes in the Women's March network were celebrities, including Shireen Qudosi (activist, Muslim reformer), Donald Trump (the president), Amy Mek (activist), Hillary Clinton (the presidential candidate in 2016), Linda Sarsour (activist, co-chair of the 2017 Women's March), Nancy Pelosi (speaker of the United States House of Representatives), and many others.

The Whole-network of Black Lives Matter

The study examined a total of 50,000 tweets that contained keywords and hashtags such as #blackexcellence, #blacklivesmatter, #blacktwitter, #blacktwittermoment, on Twitter during

July 5-17, 2016. For 50,000 tweets, 37,503 valid edges were identified, including 26,118 unique edges and 11,385 edges with duplicates. A total of 19,632 valid nodes were analyzed in the BLM network, which was less than the Women's March's network ($n = 33,802$). It indicated that for the same size of network (50,000), there were fewer Twitter users involved in the BLM discussion than the Women's March. Fewer ties ($n = 37,503$) were created in the BLM network than the Women's March's network ($n = 50,205$).

For the mention and retweet network of the BLM, the average geodesic distance was 5.30, meaning on average the information diffusion passes through about five Twitter users, which was similar to the Women's March's network (geodesic distance= 5.50). Black Lives Matter (BLM) had very low network density (0.000073). It indicated that BLM had loose networks. The whole network-level of the BLM characteristics and network were shown in Table 4.2.

The top 20 *high in-degree nodes* in the network of the BLM during July 5-17, 2016 included Paul Joseph Watson (@PrisonPlanet), Fox News (@FoxNews), Shepard Smith (@ShepNewsTeam), Nathan Allen Pirtle (@workwthecoach), Terry Everett (@CleanMy_Sprite), Democrats for Trump (@YoungDems4Trump), WORLDSTARHIPHOP (@WORLDSTAR), Deante' Hitchcock (@DeanteVH), Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton), CNN (@CNN), Linda Suhler (@LindaSuhler), AJ+ (@ajplus), GodGuns&Trump (@PatriotByGod), @SandraTXAS, Katie Pavlich (@KatiePavlich), AppSame (@AppSame), Ash J (@AshAgony), President Trump (@POTUS), Franchesca Ramsey (@chescaleigh), and deray (@deray) (see **Table 4.3**). It is noticeable that the most of these social media accounts above that had high in-degree did not support BLM. Many of them were mentioned or criticized by other social media users in the BLM contexts. For example, Fox News that suggested BLM as "murder movement and hate group" (Hanson & Simon McCormack, 2015, para. 1). Paul Joseph Watson, a YouTube

personality and radio host, was one of the first to attack the BLM (Willis, 2017). He posted on Twitter that “#BLMKidnapping is the hashtag to get this story trending.” An account named Democrats for Trump (@YoungDems4Trump even referred to #BlackLivesMatter as a terrorist organization, by stating “#BlackLivesMatter just killed two more cops in Baton Rouge. If you think #BLM is a terrorist group. This needs to end” (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016).

These high in-degree Twitter individual accounts included both mainstream media (e.g., Fox News, CNN) and individuals. For the individuals, they came from different fields, such as radio host (e.g., Paul Joseph Watson), American news anchor (e.g., Shepard Smith), businessmen (e.g., Nathan Allen Pirtle), non-profit organizations’ leaders who supported the Black Excellence viral video (e.g., Terry Everett), scholars (e.g., Linda Suhler). Some individuals were African-American, such as Nathan Allen Pirtle and Terry Everett but many were not.

For the high eigenvector centrality nodes in the network of the BLM, only the nodes that had higher than 0.002 in eigenvector centrality, were included: Fox News (@FoxNews), Paul Joseph Watson (@PrisonPlanet), Shepard Smith (@ShepNewsTeam), Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton), and GodGuns&Trump (@PatriotByGod). As mentioned above, individuals above were not supporters of the Black Lives Matter, but they were mentioned in the context.

From both the Women’s March and the Black Lives Matter networks, many media accounts, political celebrities’ accounts, and celebrities in entertainment industry were the actors with high in-degrees. The other finding was Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump existed in both the Women’s March and the BLM’s networks suggesting that the social movements were polarized along political party lines. Additionally, one important take-away is many individuals who were against the BLM movements were at the center positions of the online network.

The Whole-network of Knox Blue Dots

The research first examined the Knox Blue Dots' Twitter account and all the tweets posted by the organization. As of March 14, 2019, the Knox Blue Dots' Twitter account had 457 followers, 434 following and posted 318 tweets after the organization created a Twitter account in October 2017. All the tweets posted by the Knox Blue Dots from October 18, 2017 (the first post on Twitter) to March 14, 2019 were analyzed. As Table 4 listed, the tweets posted by the Knox Blue Dots on the following days received the top five highest numbers of retweets: 11/3/2017 (retweet count: 12036), 11/8/2017 (retweet count: 5952), 3/22/2018 (retweet count: 2714), 11/8/2017 (retweet count: 798), and 3/27/2018 (retweet count: 680).

As Table 4.4 shown, among all the tweets, the Knox Blue Dots mentioned the following accounts the most frequently: TN Democratic Party (@tndp), Knox Blue Dots (@knoxbluedots), TN House Democrats (@tndemocrats), John Ray Clemmons (@jrclemmons), and Susan Jennings (@susanjennings8). In the Knox Blue Dots' network, the top replied-to accounts were TN House Democrats (@tndemocrats), John Ray Clemmons (@jrclemmons), Susan Jennings (@susanjennings8), Snarky Yeti (@snarkyyeti), and Green Roots (@greenrootstn).

For the Knox Blue Dots, the top replied-to accounts were TN House Democrats (@tndemocrats), John Ray Clemmons (@jrclemmons), Susan Jennings (@susanjennings8), Snarky Yeti (@snarkyyeti), Green Roots (@greenrootstn), TN Democratic Party (@tndp), Andy Holt (@andyholt4tn), Kathleen Coffen (@kathleencoffen), and CamD (@cd_mur) (see Table 4).

To understand the extended network of the Knox Blue Dots, the study examined all the tweets that contained @KnoxBlueDots and "Knox Blue Dots" on Twitter. A total of 1304 tweets were used for social network analysis.

In total, 7585 valid edges were identified in the study about the Knox Blue Dots, including 2271 unique edges and 5314 edges with duplicates. A total of 906 valid nodes were analyzed. The maximum geodesic distance was 6 and the average geodesic distance was 2.70. For the mention and retweet network of the Knox Blue Dots, the average geodesic distance was 2.70, meaning on average the information diffusion passes through about two Twitter users, which is less than the Women's March. Knox Blue Dots (KBD) had a higher network density (0.005) than the networks of BLM and WM. It indicated that KBD had more closely connected networks than the other two movements in the research.

The top 20 in-degree actors in the network of Knox Blue Dots included Knox Blue Dots (@KnoxBlueDots), TN Democratic Party (@tndp), Storm old profile (@StormResist), NashvilleResist (@NashvilleResist), Moms Demand Action (@MomsDemand), Phil Bredeesen (@PhilBredeesen), Turn Tennessee Blue (@UniteBlueTN), Bristol Indivisible (@BristolIndivis), Marsha Blackburn (@VoteMarsha), Morpheus Resists (@WomanResistorNC), @WCTNDEMOCRAT, Green Roots (@GreenRootsTN), Knox County Dems (@KnoxDems), Gloria Johnson (@VoteGloriaJ), TN House Democrats (@TNDemocrats), Davidson County Dems (@nashvilledems), Hamilton County Democratic Party (@hcdp_us), Bimmerella (@bimmerella), @Jordan4SenateTN, and Indivisible_TN (@indivisibletn) (see Table 4 in the Appendix). These Twitter accounts had the most incoming ties in the network.

The top 20 out-degree actors in the network of Knox Blue Dots included FoggyBottomGal (@foggybottomgal), Green Roots (@greenrootstn), Knox Blue Dots (@KnoxBlueDots), @DC_Resister_Bee, Shannon Ritenour (@ShannonRitenour), @ChanteJulietta, Gloria Johnson (@VoteGloriaJ), Calibernication (@TheresaSchroe14), Deb M. (@Audebm), Shannon Bearman (@BearmanShannon), Tyler Jordan (@AlphaTyger), Save The

PlanetXO (@Savetheplanetxo), S Persisting (@sewpersists), PrincessMeow (@WOW_TN), Devin Nunes Mom's Hairdresser (@elynnhardi1), Lynn Leshner (@pllesher), AKIN (@WeAreAKIN), nemack (@nemack007), VivaLaResistance (@Kimmi1965), and Allyson Neal (@neal_comcast). The top 20 out-degree actors only included two organization accounts: the Green Roots and the Knox Blue Dots. The majority were individuals who described themselves as caring about democracy and political issues in society. In the Knox Blue Dots' network, individual users were more likely to be sending outgoing ties (proactively reaching out to others on Twitter). The results help us understand in the Knox Blue Dots context, how social media users use online informational engagement to reach out to people whom they thought to have close connections with the organization.

The top 20 betweenness centrality actors in the network of Knox Blue Dots included Knox Blue Dots (@KnoxBlueDots), Green Roots (@greenrootstn), TN Democratic Party (@tndp), Gloria Johnson (@VoteGloriaJ), @DC_Resister_Bee, FoggyBottomGal (@foggybottomgal), NashvilleResist (@NashvilleResist), Moms Demand Action (@MomsDemand), Knox County Dems (@KnoxDems), Storm old profile (@StormResist), Shannon Ritenour (@ShannonRitenour), Stephen Verran (@Verran179), @ChanteJulietta Calibernication (@TheresaSchroe14), TN House Democrats (@TNDemocrats), S Persisting (@sewpersists), Phil Bredesen (@PhilBredesen), Deb M. (@Audebm), and @JedGarren @FlipSistersUS.

Borgatti et al. (2018) explained that betweenness centrality is typically interpreted in terms of "the potential for controlling flows through the network – that is playing a gatekeeping or tolling-taking role" (p. 201). Therefore, in the Knox Blue Dots' network, some non-profit organizations that have supported the Democratic party or supporting other causes (against gun

violence and environment protection) played a crucial role in controlling the information flows. Some individual accounts also worked as gatekeepers for the information flows in the Knox Blue Dots' network, such as Gloria Johnson, Shannon Ritenour, S Persisting, Phil Bredesen, Deb M, and many others.

The whole network results of the Knox Blue Dots indicated that the Knox Blue Dots focused on political issues related to the Democratic party. The organization had close connections with candidates for the state and the U.S. Senate, including Phil Bredesen (@PhilBredesen, who ran unsuccessfully to represent Tennessee in the U.S. Senate), Gloria Johnson (@VoteGloriaJ, State Representative TN House District 13), and Marsha Blackburn (@VoteMarsha, a Republican who beat Bredesen to become and first female senator from the state of Tennessee). Marsha Blackburn was involved in the Knox Blue Dots' social media network when KBD mentioned Phil Bredesen: “@PhilBredesen represents one of our best options to flip a seat from red to blue in the US senate. Plz follow him and contribute! So it's not surprising that @VoteMarsha is racking in the Koch 💰 to help fund her campaign and they plan to ramp it up. <https://t.co/rm575F4Xw6> <https://t.co/y8evCSIE1M>” (Knox Blue Dots, 2018).

The Knox Blue Dots also had connections with other non-profit organizations which had shared political interest, including Turn Tennessee Blue (@UniteBlueTN, a non-profit community for connecting the left-leaning people in Tennessee), Knox County Dems (@KnoxDems), TN House Democrats (@TNDemocrats), Davidson County Democratic Party (@nashvilledems), and the organizer of the Blue Wave Crowdsourcing (@ShannonRitenou).

The organization also had outreach and collaboration with organizations beyond its political focus. For instance, the Knox Blue Dots had close communication with a local environment sustainability organization (i.e., Green Roots), gun violence issues (e.g., Moms

Demand Action), and resistance organizations (organizations that resist a government or a political power, e.g., Bristol Indivisible, Morpheus Resists). Geographically, the Knox Blue Dots had close relationships with organizations in the Knoxville area, where the organization was initiated originally, and then extended its network to Nashville (e.g., NashvilleResist) and North Carolina (@WomanResistorNC).

Overall, the whole network research found WM and BLM had loose networks online, while KBD had more closely connected networks. For the two national movements (WM and BLM), it is hard for social media users in each network to reach out to others, while for the local movement network (KBD), it is easier for individuals to reach out to other members.

In the next section, the interpersonal networks of Knox Blue Dots will be examined. The ego network survey results will be reported.

Ego Network Survey Results

The purpose of the ego network survey is to examine how individual similarities contribute to the establishment of the social group. RQ3a explored at the ego network level, who were at the structural holes positions in the Knox Blue Dots' networks. Two leaders in KBD (Leader A and Leader B) and an influencer group member (Member A) had the highest degrees ($n = 6$), indicating that they had the most interpersonal connections with others.

Structural Holes Analysis

Structural holes analysis seeks to find out individuals who situate in the gap positions of networks and gain complementary sources to information. According to the structural holes analysis, Leader B had the highest effective size (EffSize = 4.62), followed by Member A (EffSize = 4.44), Leader A (EffSize = 4.11), and Member B (EffSize = 3.83). Effective size measures the redundancy of an actor in a network by computing the “number of nodes (referred

to as alters) that a given focal node (referred to as ego) is directly connected to, minus the average number of ties that each alter has to other alters” (Lesser, Hayat, & Elovici, 2017, p. 1612). In the context of Knox Blue Dots, when actor A had a connection with actor B that was not connected to other actors (e.g., actor C, actor D), actor A’s effective network size increased.

The *efficiency* in structural holes analysis values indicated the effective size of an ego actor’s network by its actual size (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). Among the respondents, Leader B and Member B had the highest efficiency (0.77), followed by Member A (0.74), and Leader A (0.69).

Overall Network Structural of Knox Blue Dots’

The network structure of Knox Blue Dots helps us get better understanding of how the interpersonal relationships were formed in the social group. RQ3b sought to explore the overall network structural of Knox Blue Dots’ interpersonal network. In the Knox Blue Dots’ network, the network density was 0.26. Network density measures the entire interconnectedness of a network. The values of network density range from 0 to 1. A network with loosely interconnected nodes usually has a low density value, while highly interconnected nodes in a network have a high density value (Himmelboim et al., 2017). This is a loosely connected network.

The out-degree centralization was 0.21 and the in-degree centralization was 0.15, suggesting the network had outgoing ties than incoming ties. The average geodesic distance was 1.72, indicating the longest distance between two actors in the Knox Blue Dots’ network was less than 2 steps.

Members’ Similarities and Social Capital

In Knox Blue Dots, members share many similarities. RQ3c sought to explore at the ego network level, how did the similarities influence the production of social capital and the higher-

tier societal engagement. Multiple Regression Quadratic Assignment Procedures (MR-QAP) were applied to examine the effects of independent matrices (group members' similarities) on the dependent matrices (social capital and the higher-tier societal engagement).

In regards to the similarities in membership or attending events, among 17 valid samples, 14 respondents recognized themselves as participants of Women's March in Knoxville ($n = 14$, 82.4%), followed by Mom's Demand Actions ($n = 13$, 76.5%), Indivisible ($n = 8$, 47.1%), and Parent Teacher Association ($n = 2$, 11.8%). In addition to the above shared memberships, respondents also recognized themselves as members of Democrat Women of Knoxville and Knox County, League of Women Voters, MoveOn (a public policy advocacy group), Pantsuit Nation, Planned Parenthood, Tennessee Equality Project, and Tennessee Nurses' Association.

Second, I looked for similarities in understandings of social issues. The researcher examined respondents' understanding of the importance of seven social issue. On a scale of 7, ranging from "very important" to "not important at all," all of them agreed that education issue was very important ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 0.00$) and gun violence prevention ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 0.00$), followed by women's rights ($M = 6.94$, $SD = 0.24$), equality for all groups ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 0.33$), the election of Democratic candidates ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 0.33$), voting rights ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 0.33$), and Environment protection ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 0.66$). In addition to the social issues above, the respondents also cared about "gerrymandering¹", healthcare access and affordability, immigration reform and justice, income equality, separation of church and state, and no public funds for school vouchers. Third, I examined similarities in demographic information regarding gender, education, political preference, and income. The demographic similarities were already addressed in the method section. The variable of social capital explained 13.78% of the variance

¹ Gerrymandering refers to "drawing political boundaries to give your party a numeric advantage over an opposing party" (Ingraham, 2015, para. 1).

in similarities. Two types of group members' similarities had significant impacts on social capital: members' similarities in income ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$) and members' similar understandings on the importance of voting rights ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.05$). All the other items of similarities did not have significant impacts on social capital. All the similarities' variables did not have significant impacts on the higher-tier societal engagement.

In summary, the ego network analysis found that Leader A, Leader B, Member A, and Member B played crucial roles in the Knox Blue Dots' network. The research also found that Knox Blue Dots had a relatively small network. It was easy for members in Knox Blue Dots to contact each other. Two types of similarities (similarities in income and similar understandings on the importance of voting rights) had impacts on the production of social capital.

The ego network of Knox Blue Dots focused on one type of political and local social movement network. The results may not be representative for all the social movement types. The researcher also recruited a larger sample size to test a proposed social movement engagement model. In the next section, the all movements' survey results will be reported.

All Movements' Survey Results

In all movements' survey, the researcher used a panel of Amazon MTurk participants who have participated in different types of social movements. With a larger sample size, the researcher attempted to test the differences of social movement engagement for different social movement types, understand the reasons for individuals to leave some social movements, as well as test a proposed social movement engagement model (see **Figure 4.1**).

Main Study

The main survey was launched on May 17, 2019. A total of 780 participants filled out the survey in Amazon Mturk. All participants' locations were required to be in the United States.

Only the participants who answered “yes” to the question “Have you engaged online or offline in a social movement in the past five years” were considered as valid samples in the study. Among 780 samples, 603 were valid samples who participated in a social movement in the past years. To further validate the sample as actual social movement participants, the researcher deleted the respondents who spent less than 2 seconds per question, creating a total of 597 samples for data analysis. The researcher applied Cook’s Distance for outlier check and found that Participant #257 was abnormal (above 1.5) whereas all the others participants were less than 0.30 in Cook’s Distance. Participant #257 was removed from the dataset.

Descriptive Information

For the type of social movements, most of respondents participated in environmental movements (25.7%, $n = 153$), followed by feminism/women’s rights movement (23.8%, $n = 142$), LGBTQ movement (11.4%, $n = 68$), racial identity relevant social movements (9.4%, $n = 56$), political progressive movements (6.4%, $n = 38$), religious movements (6.2%, $n = 37$), other (5.7%, $n = 34$), patriot movement (4.9%, $n = 29$), anti-war movement (3.5%, $n = 21$), and labor movement (3.0%, $n = 18$).

For the level of activism, on average, respondents participated in nearly three types of social movement activities ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.64$). A correlation test was applied to test the correlation between the level of activism and two endogenous variables (i.e., the bridging dimension of social capital and the bonding dimension of social capital). The results showed that a weak correlation was found between the level of activism and the bonding dimension of social capital ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$) and between the length of activism and the bridging dimension of social capital ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$). Given this finding, the level of activism could be included as an independent variable in the structural equation modeling (SEM).

For the length of activism, individuals on average engaged in social movements for nearly four years ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 5.54$), ranging from 1 month to 45 years. A correlation test examined the correlation between the length of activism and the two endogenous variables (i.e., the bridging dimension of social capital and the bonding dimension of social capital). No correlation was found between the length of activism and the bonding dimension of social capital ($r = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$) and between the length of activism and the bridging dimension of social capital ($r = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the length of activism was excluded as an independent variable in SEM.

As for interpersonal interactions, on a scale of 5, ranging from never (1), yearly (2), monthly (3), weekly (4), to daily (5), a descriptive test in SPSS showed that individuals talked to friends monthly to weekly about social movements ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.96$), followed by members in their social movement group ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.07$), their family ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.13$), their coworkers/colleagues monthly ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.34$), and people with opposing views ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.34$). In the model building, the items of interpersonal interactions had a problematic MSV (maximum shared variance) and AVE (average shared variance) values in the model testing. Therefore, the variable of interpersonal interactions was not included in the social movement engagement model.

For the lower-tier informational engagement, two dimensions were applied. For *online informational engagement*, both proactive informational online engagement and passive online informational engagement were examined in the research. As for the proactive informational engagement, on average, respondents used “likes” about 10 times a week ($M = 10.11$, $SD = 38.01$) in social media for social movement relevant information, followed by comments ($M = 7.34$, $SD = 33.39$), emotional reactions ($M = 6.70$, $SD = 15.32$), and shares ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 17.50$). In the

main study, the above four types of online informational engagement were recoded into a 7-points Likert scale by using the percentiles' function in SPSS. As Tien (2008) stated in *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*: "As interval- and ratio-level data can always be recoded into nominal- or ordinal-level data but nominal- and ordinal-level data cannot be recoded into interval-level data, it is always better to collect data at the interval or ratio level if possible" (p. 697). Therefore, it is reasonable to recode the ratio level data of informational engagement to Likert scale. After the data recoding, the Cronbach's α for the four items of online informational engagement was 0.88. As for the passive online informational engagement, individuals' gained social movement relevant information passively from Twitter the most – about 9 times a month ($M = 9.51$, $SD = 16.69$), followed by 8 times monthly from Facebook ($M = 8.66$, $SD = 10.94$), 4 times monthly from Instagram ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 7.80$), 1 time monthly from Snapchat ($M = 1.51$, $SD = 5.58$), and 1 time monthly from Pinterest ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 4.13$). Because the Snapchat and Pinterest had low contributions to the variable of passive online informational engagement, the two items were dropped from the measure.

As for the *offline informational engagement*, on a scale of 5, ranging from never (1), yearly (2), monthly (3), weekly (4), to daily (5), for all types of proactive offline informational engagement, respondents engaged in face-to-face conversations the most ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.14$), followed by using text ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.35$), attending group meeting or group social ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.05$), using phone calls ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.33$), distributing flyers and booklets ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.10$), and door-to-door recruitment ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.95$). In the main study, a Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) procedure was used to examine variables' factor loadings and made the variables prepared for an examination of structural equation modeling. In this procedure, the

items of “texts” and “face-to-face conversations” were dropped because the two items had cross-loadings between factors in the pattern matrix.

Among all the valid samples ($N = 596$), the majority of respondents said they would continue engaging in social movements (83.1%, $n = 495$), followed by a small portion of participants who said they felt uncertain about continue engaging in social movements (14.3%, $n = 85$), and a small group of respondents said they would not engage in future social movements (2.7%, $n = 16$).

In regards to the social movements that participants ($n = 101$) felt uncertain about continuing engaging or would not engage in the future, the largest group was environmental movement participants (24.8%, $n = 25$), followed by feminist/women’s rights movements’ participants (17.8%, $n = 18$), religious movements (11.9%, $n = 12$), political progressive movements’ participants (9.9%, $n = 10$), racial identity relevant movements participants (7.9%, $n = 8$), LGBTQ movements (6.9%, $n = 7$), patriot movements (6.9%, $n = 7$), other movements (5.9%, $n = 6$), and labor movements (5.0%, $n = 5$).

Among all the respondents, a total of 84 respondents answered the questions about reasons they felt uncertain about continue engaging in social movements. On a scale of 7, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, individuals felt “I am busy with my family and work” as the reason that prevented them from engaging in future social movements the most ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.46$), followed by “I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities” ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.60$), “the goals of my social movement have changed” ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.60$), “the goals of my social movement were vague” ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.57$), “other reason” ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.81$), “I am no longer interested in the social movement” ($M =$

3.30, $SD = 1.63$), and “I do not like the people who were involved in my social movement” ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.66$).

For the individuals who selected other reasons for discontinuing, they listed the following reasons: “The people of the movement where disagreeable in the extreme” (an anti-war movement participant) “lack of time” (a LGBTQ movement participant), “a lot of work” (one environmental movement participant), “no money” (one environmental movement participant), “studying for a career” (one environmental movement participant), “goals mostly achieved” (one Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America participant), “I have other hobbies that take up my time” (one political progressive movement relevant participant), “it is expensive to travel to events” (one feminism/women’s rights movement participant), “I moved away from the group I was involved in” (one feminism/women’s rights movement participant), “the movement has died down a tiny bit” (one feminism/women’s rights movement participant). In sum, the other reasons that made people felt uncertain about engaging in future social movements included time constraints, insufficient money, individuals’ geographic relocation, and the belief that the movement died down or completed its goal.

For the 16 respondents (2.7%) who said they would not engage in future social movements, on a scale of 7, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), respondents felt “I am busy with my family and work” as the reason for them to leave their social movements ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 2.10$), followed by “I am no longer interested in the social movement” ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 2.22$), “other reason” ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 2.20$), “the goals of my social movement have changed” ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 2.10$), “the goals of my social movement were vague” ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.91$), “I do not like the people who were involved in my social movement” ($M = 3.19$, $SD =$

2.17), and “I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities” ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.26$).

For the individuals who filled out reasons in the “other” option, they listed the other reasons as follows: “judgement from others” (one racial identity relevant movement participant), “I have a change in beliefs” (one racial identity relevant social movement participant), “I felt like the movement was becoming corrupt” (one racial identity relevant social movement participant), “it was a one-off gathering, went more to listen than campaign” (a 5G social movement participant), and “no longer believe in it” (one feminism/women’s rights social movement participant).

Introducing the descriptive information of variables gives us a brief overview of the variables that will be used in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). In the next section, a two-step structural modeling procedure tested hypotheses and the proposed social movement engagement model.

Testing the Hypothesized Social Movement Engagement Model

In the proposed social movement engagement model (see **Figure 4.1**), the relationships among three levels of social movement engagement and social capital will be examined. The following section tested a hypothesized social movement engagement model and tested the hypotheses first outlined in chapter two. A two-step structural modeling procedure was adopted. The measurement model was tested with EFA and CFA. Then the proposed model was tested with SEM.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was conducted to determine the underlying structure of the higher tier engagement measures on the following 11 items: the perceived social awareness on a variety of social issues

(SE1); the perceived social awareness of personal rights (SE2); the perceived social awareness of other people's rights (SE3); the perceived social awareness of diversity (SE4); the perceived consistency of personal goals and the group's goals (SE5); perceived personal reward (SE6); perceived collective reward (SE7); perceived contribution to the well-being of society (SE8); perceived knowledge or emotional connections in the movement (SE9); perceived immediate improvements in the quality of life (SE10); perceived impacts or changes of society (SE11). Maximum Likelihood was conducted utilizing varimax rotation. The analysis produced two components, which was evaluated with eigenvalue, variance, scree plot, and residuals. After rotation and removing SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7, SE8, and SE9, the first component accounted for 37.52% of the total variance, while the second component accounted for 32.35%. Component 1 consisted of three variables: the perceived social awareness on a variety of social issues (SE1, loading .756); the perceived social awareness of personal rights (SE2, loading .780); and the perceived social awareness of other people's rights (SE3, loading .816). Component 2 consisted of two variables: perceived immediate improvements in the quality of life (SE10, loading .779) and perceived impacts or changes of society (SE11, loading .989).

All the items in the first component addressed the individuals' awareness of social issues and others after engaging in social movements. All the items in the second component addressed individuals' perceived impacts of their behaviors in society. Therefore, in the model test, the two components were renamed as "the awareness dimension of societal engagement" and "the impact dimension of societal engagement". For the awareness dimension of societal engagement, Cronbach's α was 0.83. For the variable of the impact dimension of societal engagement, Cronbach's α was 0.88.

Assessing the Measurement Model with CFA

The measurement model of this research was examined by CFA with a maximum likelihood estimation method. The results of CFA revealed that the measurement model was a good fit, $\chi^2 = 775.4$, $df = 260$, $p < .001$, CFI = .937, RMSEA = .058, 90% CI = [.053, .062], SRMR = 0.057. RMSEA < 0.05 is considered as a good fit and RMSEA < 0.08 is seen as a satisfactory fit. So the

Assessing Validity and Reliability with CFA

CFA is a process of specifying the number of factors required in the model. Using Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) can help us ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The CR values should be greater than 0.70. The AVE is used to test convergent validity, and the values should be greater than 0.5. The MSV should be used to test discriminant validity, and the values should be less than the AVE value.

In the current study, during the measurement model testing process, the researcher found the following issues that will influence the final model. First, the bridging dimension of social capital and relational engagement had a high correlation that led to greater values in MSV than AVE. Therefore, to address the discriminant validity concern, the model only included the bonding dimension of social capital. Second, the item of “phone calls” in the offline informational engagement was dropped because of low factor loading. Third, the results of the Composite Reliability (CR) test indicated that the measure of passive online informational engagement with Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram and the measure of interpersonal interactions (i.e., talked to friends, coworkers, family, members in social movement group, people with opposing views) had low CR values ($CR < 0.7$). Therefore, the variable of passive online

informational engagement and the variable of interpersonal interactions were dropped from the model.

After the measurement model testing process, all the remaining variables (i.e., online proactive informational engagement, offline informational engagement, relational engagement, two dimensions of societal engagement, and social capital bonding) were used in the final social movement engagement model and all the measures and Cronbach's alpha were shown in **Table 4.6**.

Model Fit with SEM

The proposed model achieved satisfactory fit, $\chi^2 = 786.9$, $df = 263$, $p < .001$, CFI = .936, RMSEA = .058, 90% CI = [.053, .063], SRMR = 0.0596. See **Figure 4.2**.

In the following section, the research hypotheses were tested. The path coefficients, significant levels, and R-squares will be reported.

Social Capital and Relevant Exogenous Variables

In this research, social movement engagement has three types: lower-tier informational engagement (both online and offline), mid-tier relational engagement, and higher-tier societal engagement (two dimensions: awareness dimension and impact dimension). Social capital is considered as one of the outcomes of social movement engagement. In this section, I tested the relationships between independent variables (i.e., social movement engagement) and the dependent variable (social capital bonding).

Hypothesis 1: The awareness dimension of societal engagement (1a), the impact dimension of societal engagement (1b), relational engagement (1c), offline informational engagement (1d), and online informational engagement (1e) positively influence bonding social capital.

The results indicated that the awareness dimension of societal social movement engagement ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.001$), the impact dimension of societal social movement engagement ($\beta = 0.08, p < 0.01$), relational engagement ($\beta = 0.53, p < 0.001$), and offline informational engagement ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$) positively influence the bonding dimension of social capital. Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d were supported. The online informational engagement had no significant influence on the bonding dimension of social capital ($\beta = 0.07, p > 0.05$, not significant). The hypothesis 1e was not supported. Data indicated that facilitating relational engagement contributes the most for the social capital bonding ($\beta = 0.53$) in social movement context. That means facilitating interpersonal relationships within social movement groups contributes the most to the production of social capital bonding. Offline informational engagement and societal level engagement also facilitate the creation of individuals' social capital. Online informational engagement had no contribution to individuals' creation of social capital in social movements.

Relational Engagement and Two Dimensions of Societal Engagement

In the CFA process, the researcher found that societal engagement items fell into two components: awareness (5 items) and impact (3 items). The following two hypotheses posited positive influence of relational engagement on two dimensions of societal engagement.

Hypothesis 2a: Relational engagement positively influences the awareness dimension of societal engagement.

Hypothesis 2b: Relational engagement positively influences the impact dimension of societal engagement.

The results showed that relational engagement has a positive influence on the awareness dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$) and a positive influence on the impact dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$). Hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b were supported. The results indicated that creating relational engagement facilitates the two dimensions of societal engagement. In other words, enhancing interpersonal relationships in social movement engagement process will be beneficial for movement participants to perceive their contribution to the society. It appears that relational engagement makes social movement participants to be aware of social issues and perceive more individual impacts on society. The result suggests practitioners to facilitate relational engagement in social movement process.

Offline Informational Engagement and Relational Engagement

The researcher examined how the offline informational engagement (e.g., attending offline meeting/socials, contributing to flyers and booklets distribution, and participating in door-to-door recruitment to disseminate movement relevant information) influences relational engagement at the interpersonal level. The following hypothesis 3 was posited.

Hypothesis 3: Offline informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.

Offline informational engagement had no significant influence on relational engagement ($\beta = 0.06, p > 0.005$, not significant). Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

The result indicated that offline informational engagement did not contribute much to individuals' relational engagement. However, as suggested in the result of H1d, offline informational engagement facilitated individuals' social capital in the bonding dimension. In other words, individuals' engagement in offline informational activities, such as door to door

recruitment, attending socials and meetings, facilitates the creation of social capital within the social group. Through more offline informational engagement, individuals may have more shared understandings and a sense of belonging of their social groups/social movement organizations. However, this does not necessarily create more or better interpersonal relationships.

Online Informational Engagement and Endogenous Variables

The following hypotheses examined the online informational engagement (i.e., using likes, emotional reactions, shares and comments in social media) and the endogenous variables (i.e., offline engagement, relational engagement, societal engagement).

Hypothesis 4a: Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement.

Hypothesis 4b: Online informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.

Hypothesis 4c: Online informational engagement positively influences the awareness dimension of societal engagement.

Hypothesis 4d: Online informational engagement positively influences the impact dimension of societal engagement.

Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$), relational engagement ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$), and the awareness dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.09, p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c were supported. Online informational engagement had no significant influence the impact dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.00, p > 0.05$, not significant). Hypothesis 4d was not supported. The results

indicated that online informational engagement contributed to offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and slightly contributed to societal engagement (awareness). However, engaging in online informational engagement did not contribute to the impact dimension of societal engagement and social capital bonding. It means that simply using likes, emotional reactions, shares, and comments in social movement cannot make movement participants perceive their impacts on society and cannot help them produce social capital within their social movement group.

Overall, the model explained 51 percent of the variance of social capital bonding ($R^2 = .51$), 33 percent of societal engagement – awareness ($R^2 = .33$), and 12 percent of societal engagement – impact ($R^2 = .12$).

In the following section, statistical tests in SPSS were applied to test how willingness in future movement engagement may affect individuals' three levels of social movement engagement.

Willingness in Future Engagement and Three Levels of Engagement

Social movement engagement has three types. Some movements end up being only one-time gatherings, while the other movements aim to achieve long-term goals. The following hypotheses examined how willingness to participate in future social movement engagement may affect individuals' three levels of social movement engagement. In the data analysis, respondents who said they would leave future social movements or respondents who felt unsure about future engagement were combined into one group to be compared with those who stated that they would continue to be engaged. There are two reasons for data combination: 1) The respondents who said they would leave the movement only had a small sample size ($n = 16$) and 2) The two

categories, respondents who said they would leave future social movements or respondents who felt unsure about future engagement, had similar features. Logistic regression tests were applied to test the hypotheses below because the dependent variable in the hypotheses was dichotomous and the independent variables were continuous.

Hypothesis 5: Social movement participants who have higher societal level social movement engagement (5a), higher mid-level relational social movement engagement (5b), higher offline informational engagement (5c), and higher online informational engagement (5d) would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.

A logistic regression was performed to determine which independent variables (societal level social movement engagement, mid-level relational social movement engagement, offline informational engagement, and online informational engagement) are predictors of future social movement engagement. Regression results showed that the logistic regression model fit of two predictors (the awareness dimension of societal engagement and mid-level relational social movement engagement) was statistically distinguishing future social movement engagement and the result was significant, $\chi^2(2) = 68.13, p < 0.001$. The model explained 18.1% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance and correctly classified 81.9% of cases. Therefore, Hypothesis 5a was partly supported, Hypothesis 5b was supported. Hypothesis 5c and 5d were not supported.

In summary, social movement participants who have higher societal level social movement engagement (the awareness dimension) and higher mid-level relational social movement engagement would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.

Social Movement Type and Willingness for Future Social Movements

Social movements participants are mobilized for various causes. Some movements advocate for human rights, including racial equality, gender equality, labor rights, and LGBTQ rights, while the other movements aim at expressing participants' opinions in socio-political issues, such as environmental issues, international affairs, and political issues. On average, for all types of movement participants, they engaged in their movements for 4.34 years ($SD = 5.54$). However, some movements can keep their participants for a long-term, while the other movement types only sustain for a short time. Labor movement participants had the longest time in their social movement ($n = 18$, $M = 9.34$, $SD = 11.36$), followed by anti-war movement participants ($n = 21$, $M = 8.00$, $SD = 8.41$), LGBTQ movement participants ($n = 68$, $M = 6.55$, $SD = 7.07$), environmental movement participants ($n = 153$, $M = 4.55$, $SD = 5.97$), religious movement participants ($n = 37$, $M = 4.11$, $SD = 3.51$), political progressive movement participants ($n = 38$, $M = 3.30$, $SD = 2.83$), feminism or women's rights movement participants ($n = 142$, $M = 3.29$, $SD = 4.51$), racial identity relevant movement participants ($n = 56$, $M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.82$), and patriot movement participants ($n = 29$, $M = 2.78$, $SD = 2.73$). The following hypothesis examined the relationship between movement types and willingness for future movement engagement.

Hypothesis 6: For different types of social movements, individuals have different willingness to participate in future social movement activities.

In the data analysis, respondents who said they would leave future social movements or respondents who felt unsure about future engagement were combined into one group.

A Chi-square test was applied to compare individuals' willingness to participate in future social movements in different types of movements. No significant differences were found

between different types of movements $\chi^2(9) = 15.15, p > 0.05$. Hypothesis 6 was rejected. There appears to be no impacts of social movement types on individuals' willingness to participate in future social movement activities. In other words, the length of social movement participants is not a crucial factor to impact individuals' future social movement participation.

In summary, the all movements' survey tested a social movement engagement model and found that offline informational engagement, relational engagement, two dimensions of societal engagement positively influence the bonding dimension of social capital. Relational engagement positively influences two dimensions of societal engagement. Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and the impact dimension of societal engagement. Social movement participants who will engage in future social movement activities have higher mid-level relational social movement engagement, mid-level relational social movement engagement, and offline informational engagement than the participants who will leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement. All the results of RQs and hypotheses are shown in Table 4.1 and Table 4.5.

The research results of four types of research methods give us some implications theoretically and practically. In the next section, the theoretical and practical implications of the dissertation will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The public relations literature has generally focused on functional organization-centered perspectives, applying theories, such as excellence theory, situational theory of publics, and others to research how to manage the relationships between publics and organizations. As an alternative perspective in public relations, the co-creational perspective treats the organization and public as equal partners in the meaning-making process. Scholars advocating for the co-creational perspective believe that public and organizations are co-creators in meaning making and that organizations may need to give up some control over the process of meaning creation (Taylor & Kent, 2014; Theunissen, 2014). This dissertation applied the co-creational approach to the social movement context and discussed how publics and social movement organizations (e.g., Knox Blue Dots) co-create meanings, establish relationships, and contribute to society. In this discussion section, the conceptual contributions of the dissertation (e.g., three levels of social movement engagement) will be introduced first, followed by insights into the structure of social movement engagement (stars and villagers in networks), and the outcomes of public relations fostered social movement engagement.

Public Relations and Social Movement Engagement

Conceptual Contributions: Three Levels of Social Movement Engagement

“Engagement is challenged by the lack of measurement tools, such as empirically reliable scales and variables, and presents an opportunity for future research to focus on advancing measurement and move away from descriptions and settings” (Johnston & Taylor, 2018, p. 3). To fix the gap in the engagement literature, the dissertation contributed to the measurement of engagement, provided reliable measures of three levels of social movement engagement, and

tested the impact of three levels of social movement engagement as independent variables on social capital.

Overall, I tested a proposed social movement engagement model (**Figure 4.1**) and found that the model had a good fit (**Figure 4.2**). The model indicated the relationships among three levels of social movement engagement and social capital. The model suggested that social movement practitioners should focus on developing members' offline engagement, relational engagement, and societal engagement that can increase members' social capital within the movement group. The model also tells us that relational engagement plays a crucial role in social movement engagement. It facilitates social movement members' awareness of social issues, members' perceived impacts on society, and bonding social capital. Therefore, facilitating relational engagement at the interpersonal level is crucial for the success of social movement engagement. In the following section, I will start from the most vital component of the model, relational engagement, and then discuss the conceptual and practical implications of the model.

Conceptual Contribution of the Mid-tier Relational Engagement

Ferguson (1984) suggested that public relations scholars focus on relationships. Since then, there has been a fair amount of theorizing of OPR (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). The OPR approach has brought valuable conceptual change to public relations scholarship by placing the "relationship" in a crucial role in the study of public relations. Engagement emerged as an extension of the OPR public relations framework.

Johnston and Taylor (2019) posited that there are three tiers for measuring engagement: the lower-tier of informational engagement, the mid-tier relational engagement, and the higher-tier societal engagement. The relational engagement is defined as mid-level engagement,

indicating the “connections and relationships but at the individual level of analysis” (Johnston & Taylor, 2018, p. 6). Relational engagement facilitates understanding between and among group members and social groups. In this research, relational engagement was measured with five items in the all movements’ survey: dialogue, voice, trust, reciprocity, and satisfaction. The operationalization of relational engagement was found to be reliable (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.87) and it can be applied to study other public relations contexts, such as employee engagement and CSR engagement.

Social movement engagement facilitates mobilization, in-group collaboration, and belongingness. During the process of social movement engagement, relationships are created between and among group members. The survey results suggest that the production of social capital and the two dimensions of societal engagement are the endogenous variables of relational engagement. Relational engagement positively influences the bonding dimension of social capital ($\beta = 0.53, p < 0.001$), the awareness dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$), and the impact dimension of societal engagement ($\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$).

This finding has implications for public relations in social movements because bonding occurs within social movement organizations. Williams (2006) noted that,

Bonding occurs when strongly tied individuals, such as family and close friends, provide emotional or substantive support for one another. The individuals with bonding social capital have little diversity in their backgrounds but have stronger personal connections. The continued reciprocity found in bonding social capital provides strong emotional and substantive support and enables mobilization. (p. 597)

Williams (2006) identified two interpretations of bonding. First, bonding facilitates interpersonal relationships within social movement organizations that could generate strong ties and provide

emotional support for members in a group. Second, individuals with bonding social capital have similar backgrounds that make them share similar opinions around issues.

Adding to the survey findings, the Blue Dots ego network results are consistent with Williams (2006). The ego network analysis results indicated that the Knox Blue Dots members shared many similarities: All of them were White and Democrats. The majority of them had similar household incomes (\$50,000 to \$74,999), were females who were also members of Mom's Demand Actions. They had shared similar opinions in a variety of social issues, including preventing gun violence, women's rights, voting rights, and the election of Democratic candidates. The Knox Blue Dots members reported that they considered the issues as very important (on a scale of 7, the means ranged from 6.76 to 7.00). According to the results of RQ3c, two types of group members' similarities had significant impacts on the creation of social capital: members' similarities in income ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$) and members' similar understandings on the importance of voting rights ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.05$). These similarities strengthened their in-group connections and made it easier for them to create shared emotional closeness, the feeling of belongingness, and shared understandings.

Moreover, according to the in-depth interviews, Knox Blue Dots members have used a variety of approaches to strengthen their interpersonal relationships, including regular book clubs, group meetings, socials, one-on-one texts and phone calls, and many others. Knox Blue Dots participants said social movement engagement helped them to find like-minded communities and create networks. The Knox Blue Dots members reported that the social movement engagement has cultivated potentially long-term relationships and helps them get to know more friends. This finding supports Putnam's (1995) argument that the bonding dimension of social capital contributes to in-group understanding, loyalty, reciprocal relationships, psychological support,

and solidarity for members in a community. For social movement communication practitioners, we can learn from Knox Blue Dots that establishing interpersonal relationships, particularly one-on-one interactions, facilitates group members' relational engagement that further enhances members' bonding social capital and increases members' loyalty and belongingness to the social movement group/organization. When future social movements want to foster more belongingness and closeness within social groups, practitioners could focus on cultivating group members' interpersonal relationships using offline activities, such as regular meetings, book clubs, and socials. Additionally, group members' similarities facilitate the production of social capital. For many social movement organizations, participants are mobilized for the shared goals. In communication process, practitioners could use a variety of ways to facilitate group members' shared understandings of social issues and provide more opportunities to group members to have interpersonal dialogue, activities to hear members' voices, facilitate trust within the group, and create reciprocal and satisfactory relationships. In other words, to keep people involved in the social movement and allow them to create relational social capital, social movements need to extend activities beyond advocacy (protests and public events) to build member relationships.

Conceptual Contributions of the Higher-tier Societal Engagement

Societal engagement is seen as the highest-tier engagement, focusing on “action and impact at a social level of analysis” (Johnston & Taylor, 2018, p. 6). Both the in-depth interview findings and the all movements' survey extend our understandings of public relations fostered societal engagement.

The goal of social movements is to affect changes. For many social movements, participants have shared social movement goals, such as equal pay for different genders, equal

rights for the LGBTQ community, environmental protection, and many more. These social movements aim at goals at the societal level.

Through an exploratory factor analysis in the all movements' survey, the researcher found that the 11 items of societal engagement fell into two components: the awareness dimension of societal engagement and the impact dimension of societal engagement. The awareness dimension of societal engagement (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87) and the impact dimension of societal engagement (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85) suggest that social movement participants were aware of the improvements in the quality of life of their community or their social activist group after their participation in social movements. More importantly, they believe that they have seen impacts or changes in society. This dissertation's operationalization of societal engagement is a unique contribution to the public relations literature that has not yet been addressed in previous research. Measures of societal engagement have many potential applications to other contexts in public relations (e.g., CSR, corporate social advocacy), political communication (e.g., political campaigns, government-public relationships), marketing areas (e.g., cause related marketing) and many other communication areas.

Social capital matters a great deal in society. "Social capital produces trust, provides information, and creates the norms of society...creates a type of public good that benefits many members of a society" (Taylor, 2010, p. 9). This study makes a unique contribution to the social capital literature by adding the impacts of societal engagement on social capital. The SEM results in the all movements' survey indicated that the awareness dimension ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.001$) and the impact dimension of societal social movement engagement ($\beta\beta = 0.08, p < 0.01$), positively influence the bonding dimension of social capital. It means that if individuals perceive their actions have more societal impacts, they tend to have more social capital within their social

movement groups. This social capital means stronger relationships and potentially more perceived personal impacts at the societal level. The data from the in-depth interviews also deepen our understanding of societal engagement. According to the interviews, both Women's March and Knox Blue Dots participants said the two movements created changes in the society's political climate, provide opportunities for more individuals to be aware of social issues, and take proactive roles in facilitating social changes.

Theoretically, the operationalization of societal engagement adds depth to the current engagement literature by addressing the societal influence of engagement. The concept of engagement has been widely applied in public relations and communication fields at the lower-tier level, focusing on how informational engagement in social media influences organization-public relationships. However, public relations has profound impacts beyond the individual or organizational level. As Heath (2006) indicated, public relations contributes to the fully functioning society and makes society a better place to live. The results in the study enhance our understanding of the societal level engagement and its impact on the production of social capital within a social movement group.

Practically, the research results indicated that public relations practitioners or movement members performing public relations roles in social movements could make their members aware of their actions' impacts at the societal level and how their social movement engagement behaviors could bring certain changes to the society. This dissertation provides a roadmap of how to do this. First, Johnston, Lane, Hurst, and Beatson (2018) argued that "social impacts have both an immediate felt consequence on the quality of life of a community... and can also be experienced after a period of time, when the full significance of the impact is contextually understood" (p. 172). Practically, social movement practitioners should be aware that they need

to have two plans to make members perceive their impacts on society: how the social movement engagement could bring immediate changes on the quality of the social group and how the social movement engagement could bring significant and fundamental social change with members' efforts. Second, Heath (2018) claimed that actions that can be used to achieve engagement, such as "aligning individual and collective interests as shared goals," "addressing individual and collective expectations, goals, and mutual benefits," "being collectively rewardable, rather than fostering loss" (pp. 40-41) help individuals and organizations strive for a fully functioning society. Collective actions' goals should not be castles in the sky, but should be real and practical. When social movements practitioners advocate for causes, they should use communication to align the group's collective goals with individuals' personal goals. When individuals feel rewarded personally, they tend to contribute to the social movements in the long-term. Third, social movement practitioners should be aware that relational engagement facilitates societal engagement. It is essential to provide opportunities to individuals in social movements to create interpersonal relationships.

Conceptual Contributions of the Lower-tier Informational Engagement

In public relations, many scholars have studied the impact of social media engagement on organization-public relationships (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Ji, Chen, Tao, & Li, 2019; Ji, Li, North, & Liu, 2017; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Men & Tsai, 2013, 2014, 2016; Men, Tsai, Chen, & Ji, 2018; Saxton & Waters, 2014; Smith, Men, & Al-Sinan, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2013, 2018). According to their results, researchers have found that social media engagement (e.g., share, like, comment, emotional reactions) could bring many positive outcomes for organizations, including better organization-public relationships (Men & Tsai, 2014; Tsai & Men, 2018), public advocacy (Men & Tsai, 2014), and organizational reputation (Ji et al., 2017). However, the previous

research still treats organizations as the center of communication, rather than treating organizations and the public as partners in the meaning-making process. Moreover, many previous online informational engagement research has used social media engagement as a dependent variable (e.g., Tsai & Men, 2013; Ji et al., 2019) and ignored that social media engagement could be seen as a communicative tool that leads to more offline interpersonal interactions, interpersonal relationships, and individuals' social movement engagement at the societal level.

To fix the gap in the social media (online) engagement literature, in this dissertation, the impact of online informational engagement was studied through two research methods: social network analysis and survey methods. In this research, informational engagement is considered as the lowest level of engagement, including measures of counts of interactivity in social media and offline contexts. Applying mixed methods provides triangulation to the research and provides a holistic networked view to the social media engagement research.

First, the whole network analysis was applied to examine individuals' retweet and mention behaviors in social media. Retweeting and mentioning behaviors in social media are considered as a lower-tier online informational engagement. The whole network dataset informed us that if the social movement networks online are large, the quality of online informational engagement may become problematic. When the "quality" is mentioned here, I am referring to three aspects: 1) the loose structure and low density of the online networks that have many social media users, 2) the difficulty of reaching out to others in a large network, 3) polarized, opposing, and even vicious opinions online that may intensify inaccurate stereotypes for some social groups.

First of all, network structure and density are crucial for the quality of online informational engagement. “Density is a way of describing the overall communication links in a network and thus represents how information flows among organizations in a community... Density offers a general picture of the connectedness and thus potential information flow throughout the network” (Taylor & Doerfel, 2011, p. 321). A relatively moderate density provides order in a network and indicates more in-group connectedness (Taylor & Doerfel, 2003, 2011). More importantly, network density is an important factor that influences the production of social capital (Taylor & Doerfel, 2011). A dense network with active group members brings high level of social capital to a group (Brown & Ashman, 1996). In contrast, for digital social movement networks with a lot of online discussions may have loose network structure and low network density. According to the whole network analysis, the WM and BLM had low network density while KBD had a higher network density. That means social media users who are involved in online discussion of the two movements were loosely connected, while social media users that addressed KBD topic were more closely connected. Therefore, online informational engagement for a national or international social movement that has loose structure and a low density does not indicate high social capital.

Second, the loose structure and low density lead to another problem: social media users within the online community are distanced from each other. In this research, as for average geodesic distance, WM and BLM had relatively larger average geodesic distance. The average geodesic distance indicates how close the social media users are in each online social movement network (Wasserman & Faust, 2009). For both WM and BLM, the average geodesic distance was about 5 indicating that there were more than 5 paths between two social media users in the two networks. For KBD, the average geodesic distance was about 2, indicating that about 2 paths

between two social media users in the KBD network. The maximum geodesic distances (the farthest distance between two social media users in a network) for the three movements were WM_{19} , BLM_{16} , and KBD_6 . Overall, the geodesic distance results above indicated that for the two national movements, it is hard for social media users in each network to be connected to each other, while for the local movement network, social media users are closer to each other.

Third, online informational engagement includes many polarized, opposing, and even vicious opinions online that may intensify inaccurate stereotypes for some social groups. Information diffusion in social media depends on the behavior of retweets and mentions (Bastos et al., 2013). Previous literature also found that retweeting has an “echo chamber” effect (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Colleoni et al., 2014) that individuals tend to retweet the like-minded people’s information (Barberá et al., 2015; Shin & Thorson, 2017). However, the research results indicated that both like-minded people and people with opposing opinions were involved in online informational engagement. Some political celebrities and news accounts were at the central positions of online informational networks, while common people were marginalized in the online discussion. In the BLM network, I found that some individuals who did not support the movement had high in-degree. For example, Paul Joseph Watson, a YouTube personality and radio host, was one of the first to attack the BLM and used the hashtag #BLMKidnapping in his tweet. Another Twitter account named Democrats for Trump (@YoungDems4Trump) even referred to #BlackLivesMatter as a terrorist organization. Fox News was also a high in-degree node in the BLM network. Fox News suggested BLM as “murder movement and hate group” (Hanson & Simon McCormack, 2015, para. 1). We should acknowledge that BLM online discussion was led by many celebrities who supported the movement, such as Terry Everett, a non-profit organization’ leader who supported the Black Excellence viral video. However, we

need to rethink the function of online informational engagement. It not only provides a platform for individuals to find like-minded people, but also may push new stereotypes to social media users (e.g., the stereotype of BLM as “murder movement and hate group”). These stereotypes could intensify the anger of the African-American community and make the society more divided and polarized.

In sum, the whole network analysis of three social movements gave us more in-depth understanding of the potential problems of informational engagement. Even though many scholars in communication have emphasized the positive impacts of social media engagement on organizations and society, the research found some evidence that supported the poor quality of online informational engagement in large and loosely-connected online networks.

In the survey research, online informational engagement was measured with four items: using likes, emotional reactions, shares, and comments in social media (Ji et al., 2019). The operationalization of online informational engagement was found to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.88). The offline informational engagement was measured (Cronbach's alpha = 0.75) with three items: door-to-door recruitment, distributed flyers and booklets, and attendance at group meeting/group social. Informational engagement is important for social movement organizations' information dissemination and for publics' information gathering.

The all movements' survey results indicated that online informational engagement impacts relational engagement and offline informational engagement, but has no impact on the bonding dimension of social capital. Offline information engagement does have an impact on the bonding dimension of social capital. In other words, when members only click on likes, emotional reactions in social media, sharing movement relevant information, or giving comments in social media, there is no establishment of in-group social capital. This finding runs

counter to much of the engagement literature that suggests that social media engagement has a positive influence on public advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Obar, Zube & Lampe, 2012).

The results suggest that offline informational activities strengthen *in-group bonding*. This dissertation departed from the literature and instead treated publics and organization as co-creators in social movements and tested informational engagement as an *independent variable* that facilitates the production of social capital and higher-tier societal engagement.

From a co-creational perspective, relationships among publics and organizations should be cultivated for the long-term, rather than a short period (Botan & Taylor, 2006). For many social movements, organizers and participants need to work hand-in-hand for many years to change the infrastructural, ideologies, and stereotypes of society to achieve social changes. Additionally, social movements need to mobilize a variety of resources, including money, space, and human resources (Sommerfeldt, 2011). Maintaining memberships is also crucial for social movement organizations. For the two reasons above, social movement organizers and leaders always want to maintain long-term relationships with their members. However, the all movements' survey results suggest that there is no relationship between individuals' willingness to future social movement engagement and individuals' online informational engagement ($t = 0.637$, $df = 595$, $p > 0.05$). In other words, for individuals who want to engage in future social movements, they are not more likely to use likes, comments, emotional reactions, and shares in social media than individuals who do not want to engage in future social movements. Moreover, the research found relationships between individuals' willingness to participate in future social movement engagement and individuals' offline informational engagement ($t = 2.27$, $df = 593$, $p < 0.05$), individuals' willingness to participate in future social movement engagement and relational social movement engagement ($t = 9.14$, $df = 576$, $p < 0.001$), and individuals'

willingness to participate in future social movement engagement and societal level social movement engagement ($t = 7.81$, $df = 575$, $p < 0.001$). The above results showed that the frequency of online informational engagement is not the key factor that differentiates member retention.

The findings suggest that it may be time to rethink how public relations treats online engagement. Why is that social media engagement cannot facilitate the creation of social capital, higher-tier societal engagement (impact dimension), and long-term relationships? We may find some clues from the existing literature.

First of all, social media platforms have been used by organizations as one-way and monologic communication tools (Kent & Taylor, 2016) and lack effective one-on-one dialogue between publics and organizations. “Existing social media venues like Twitter or Facebook, filled with advertisements and distractions, and poorly designed for substantive, interactive, discussions” (Kent, 2013, p. 341). “Most social media engagement articles find engagement via social media to be a one-way communication process from an organization to followers or friends, rather than constituting any sort of participatory or interactive engagement” (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 386). In the social movement context, many social movement organizations use different social media platforms to push information to publics but these one way tactics lack in-depth one-on-one interactions and relationship development.

Second, online communities for large national or international level social movements are usually loosely structured. “Many online ties are between persons who are weakly tied, socially and physically distant, and not bound into densely knit work structures or narrow circles of friends” (Grabner-Kräuter & Bitter, 2015, p. 59). For many national or international social movements, organizations only post movement relevant information on their Facebook page or

Twitter account, and ignore the comments and questions from the public. The loose structures of social movement organizations' in social media make it more difficult for individuals to establish real engagement with the organizations.

Third, not everyone in online social networks has equal positions. “Brokers and *tertiuses* are the most influential members of a network” (Kent, Sommerfeldt, Saffer, 2016, p. 93).

According to the Social Studio research, often political celebrities and news accounts on Twitter were at the central positions of online informational networks. Common people or citizen activists were rarely central in the online discussions of social movements in national or international social movements (e.g., WM and BLM). Many social media users who made excellent statements about social movement topics received no retweets, mentions, or shares in the networked social media. They may have felt marginalized when they saw a celebrity receive attention so it might have been easy for people who had the potential to be strong social movement members to change their attention from one social movement to other social movements. When individuals are in the marginalized positions in the social movement network, it is more likely that they think themselves as an unimportant component in the movement and leave the social movement. Celebrities may bring attention to the social issue but they do not help to facilitate discussions, relationships or social capital.

Fourth, online informational engagement is not easy. It may be hard for common people to see their impacts at the societal level, while celebrities gain a lot of exposure in social media (Fitch, 2017). For example, many celebrities in the #MeToo movement have more media exposure, such as Alyssa Milano, Tarana Burke, and Anita Hill. In contrast, common users' posts in social media were barely visible.

Even though many limitations and restrictions of social media are addressed above, I am not arguing that online informational engagement has no value at all. I acknowledge that online informational engagement has many functions in facilitating social movements. First, social media engagement has impacts on offline informational engagement ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$). Social media engagement serves as an information diffusion to make people know the offline protest-relevant information. Second, social media engagement has an impact on relational engagement ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$) at interpersonal level. However, we should notice that relationships that are created online are weak ties (Ellison et al., 2011; Rozzell et al., 2014). Sutcliffe, Binder, and Dunbar (2018) argued that “social support from weak ties was more prevalent in overall frequency... strong ties were perceived as providing more emotional and informational support than weak ties” (pp. 228-229). Even though weak ties in social media can provide heterogeneous networks for social media users, we cannot see a clear connection between weak ties and long-term relationships. Kiecker, and Hartman (1994) found evidence about tie strength and relationship length. “The majority of strong ties also are long-term relationships, while weak ties more often are short-term relationships” (p. 466). Bennett (2005) also argued that “weak ties may also produce a weakness of core ideas” (p. 209). In other words, online informational engagement on Twitter provides weak ties to interpersonal networks but these weak ties usually tend to be short-term relationships that cannot contribute to significant impact on cohesion and shared ideas. In public relations field, negotiating the relationships among different parties in a long-term is one of the goals.

Third, social media engagement also makes people aware of social issues. Previous research found that a diverse network is beneficial for raising individuals’ social issue awareness and expanding the movement (Bennett, 2003). Sommerfeldt and Yang (2017) also agreed that

weak and diverse networks have efficacy in raising social issue awareness, but said, “the capacity of such networks to enact substantive change has been questioned... such networks’ capacity to influence policy is likely limited” (p. 835). For example, the #MeToo social movements that were initiated online as a kind of hashtag activism made public rethink sexual harassment issues in society (Xiong, Cho, & Boatwright, 2019). However, even though the #MeToo social movements reached out to a large social media network internationally, the capacity of #MeToo to influence policy change is limited.

Lastly, we should acknowledge that online informational engagement provides many benefits to individuals, including self-expression, self-presentation (Seidman, 2013), and finding like-minded people (Heatherly, Lu, & Lee, 2017). However, it is time for us to reconsider social media as an information diffusion platform. It is not a panacea for facilitating fundamental changes in society. More importantly, concrete changes at the societal level cannot merely rely on online likes, shares, and comments. To facilitate fundamental social changes, we need to rely on the power of offline activities to form networks, promote lobbying, legislative reform, and even political change. When communication practitioners organize offline activities, it is crucial for them to enhance members’ interpersonal relationships and maintain long-term and strong ties within organizations. Social media cannot perform these functions and social movements that only use social media to build awareness and motivate action are losing out on ways to change society.

Conceptual Contribution of the Networks of Social Movements: Stars and Villagers

In the social network literature, the focal nodes (or named as “brokers”) are considered to hold advantageous positions in social networks (Burt, 1992). According to Burt’s (1992) structural hole theory, an actor that is situated at the brokerage position gains more benefits than

the other actors in the network. According to the ego network analysis, some members in the Knox Blue Dots situated at the structural holes' positions, may be getting more benefits than the other members in the network. Benefits of network participation vary and social movement member benefits may be different from the benefits gained by members participating in economically focused networks such as companies or industry groups.

To better understand network benefits, the triangulation approach was employed in the data analysis process. In the ego-network analysis of research, I found that some actors had more central positions than other members in the group. To go deeper into this, I looked through the in-depth interview transcripts again to understand how the individuals who were “stars” in the Knox Blue Dots’ group (individuals in a network who gain structural hole positions) talked about their personal outcomes of social movement engagement. According to their in-depth interviews, the “stars” of Knox Blue Dots said they perceived personal development as an outcome of social movement engagement, such as leadership positions, communication skills, and confidence, while the majority of other participants in the in-depth interviews said that they have not perceived direct changes in their life after participating in the social movements. When I returned to the Knoxville Women’s March’s leaders’ transcripts, I noticed that they also shared similar opinions in their interviews in regards to their personal development. They said that they had more intangible rewards (e.g., self-development) than tangible rewards (e.g., money). The results indicated that for the “stars” in a social group, they had more chances to gain self-improvement and opportunities with social movement engagement, while regular members (or “villagers”) did not perceive direct impacts of social movement engagement on their life individually.

Theoretically, *the star approach to engagement* adds to the current literature of social movement engagement. Previous engagement literature of the star approach has examined

organizations' network positions and how the positions impact organizations' engagement on social media platforms (Saffer, Yang, Morehouse, & Qu, 2019; Yang & Saffer, 2018). While the level of analysis is different, Saffer et al. and Yang and Saffer's research is relevant to this dissertation. Their research has found that NGOs' organizational network characteristics have impacts on their prominence in the media coverage and social media conversations (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Being central matters in terms of media coverage and social media conversations meaning that organizations get something tangible out of their centrality. This dissertation research adds to the literature by showing how individual "stars" in social movement groups gain individual benefits and have personal engagement outcomes.

The research also found significant effects of willingness to participate in future social movements on societal level social movement engagement ($t = 7.81$, $df = 575$, $p < 0.001$) and on relational social movement engagement ($t = 9.14$, $df = 576$, $p < 0.001$). The results indicated that social movement retention matters for individuals to gain mid-level and higher-level social movement engagement. This finding is important for social movement recruitment and retention. Villagers are necessary for social movement success because they provide support and create a solid and robust foundation to long-lived social movements. In the long-term, villagers who do not feel that they have benefited from participation in a social movement may have decreased motivation to continue to advocate on behalf of the issue. This may lead them to leave the social movement. According to the all movements' survey, I found that individuals who said they would not engage in future social movements and individuals who felt uncertain about continue engaging in social movements, the reason that scored the highest was "I am busy with my family and work." Therefore, when villagers perceive less personal motives or found themselves as less important in the social movement, they tend to discontinue engage in social movements.

Practically, for social movement organizations, it is essential to not only motivate “stars” (e.g., leaders or central actors) but motivate “villagers” who have not received direct benefits at the personal level by engaging in social movements. As Ferree and Miller (1985) said, “if there already is some intrinsic motivation to participate, any extrinsic reward may be self-defeating. A plausible external cause or incentive may lead one to discount belief or intention as the cause of an action” (p. 53). Social movement organizers need to promote the intrinsic motivations and beliefs of the organization’s advocated causes. Intrinsic motivations need to be enhanced to motivate individuals to believe in the cause of the social movement. Additionally, social movement practitioners also need to make their members feel rewarded in the group and organize activities to help members establish their in-group interpersonal relationships.

Creating more empowering communication relationships and personal social capital is crucial for public relations engagement. To cultivate personal social capital, individuals could make efforts to get access to more resources, such as broaden their social networks by connecting with individuals from more heterogeneous backgrounds to enhance their bridging social capital (Lin, 1999). Moreover, individuals could strengthen relationships with other in-group members to enhance their bonding social capital. Social movement practitioners should also be aware of creating opportunities to facilitate offline interpersonal interactions. Additionally, to increase the number of people striving to be “stars”, organizations need to recognize individual activists’ contributions to the social movement.

In summary, this discussion section articulated the contributions of relational engagement, societal engagement, informational engagement, and network structure theoretically and practically. In the next section, the conclusions, research limitations, and areas for future research will be discussed.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Key Findings

In summary, according to the in-depth interviews, three main RQs were examined: the meaning co-creation of two movements, the motivations of two movements, and engagement outcomes. Concerning the meaning co-creation, common themes emerged for both Women's March and Knox Blue Dots: 1) direct trigger: reaction to the presidential election, 2) movement relevant cause (women's rights vs. creating a community of likeminded people), and 3) profound concern for causes: reactions to other social problems.

As for the motivations of social movement engagement, both the Women's March and the Knox Blue Dots emphasized other-oriented motivations, society level motivations, and network level motivations. The Women's March has an additional theme of personal level motivation motivations of social movement engagement.

For both the Women's March and the Knox Blue Dots, the outcomes of social movement engagement included the following three aspects: 1) individual level: personal development and emotions, 2) community level: find like-minded community, and 3) national level: changes in political climate. The Knox Blue Dots' social movement engagement had an extra outcome: network level outcome: cultivating long-lasting relationships for members.

The whole network analysis results found that WM and BLM had loose networks online, while KBD had more closely connected networks. For the two national movements (WM and BLM), it appears difficult for social media users in each network to reach out to others, while for the local movement network (KBD), it is easier for individuals to reach out to other members.

The all movements' survey results indicated that two dimensions of societal engagement, relational engagement, and offline informational engagement positively influence the in-group

bonding social capital. Relational engagement positively influences the two dimension of societal engagement. Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement, relational engagement, and the awareness dimension of societal engagement. The research also found significant effects of willingness to participate in future social movements on societal level social movement engagement and on relational social movement engagement. A social movement engagement model was tested in the research and achieved good fit (See Figure 4.2).

The model provides a roadmap to rethink the multi-layer meanings of the engagement as a concept and explains the mechanism underlying three levels of social movement engagement. The model informs us to reconsider the power of online informational engagement— even though Online information engagement has impact on facilitating offline informational engagement and can help group members to create weak ties within their social movement group, but it does not have significant impact on the production of social capital bonding. The model also tells us that social movement organizations need to facilitate opportunities to increase members' relational engagement because it can impact two dimensions of societal engagement and the production of social capital bonding.

For public relations scholars and social movement communication practitioners, this dissertation suggests a path forward in conceptualizing, measuring, and applying engagement in social movements. Conceptually, the research clarified the concept of three tiers of social movement engagement and addressed that social movement engagement cannot represent the whole picture of engagement. Yet, simply applying online informational engagement to social movement has many problems in practice, such as a low level of network density, a low level of social capital, lack of interpersonal relationships, and many other problems. The mid-tier

relational engagement at the interpersonal level and the higher-tier societal engagement should be added to the engagement research. Operationally, the research operationalized three levels of social movement engagement and tested the social movement engagement model. To apply social movement engagement in practice, social movement practitioners could use multiple approaches to increase individuals' social movement engagement, such as establishing more connected local networks for social movements, facilitating interpersonal relationships within social movement groups, and making individuals aware of their social impacts.

Yet, there are limitations that need to be acknowledged.

Limitations

The research has several limitations. The original intent was to study three social movements. The researcher only interviewed three participants from the Black Lives Matter movement in the study and the in-depth interview data of the Black Lives Matter part did not reach saturation. The lack of an identity based movement in the key informant interviews means that I cannot share the words of the people who joined that movement. There are some possible reasons for the lack of connection with BLM activists. For example, interview bias may exist when the researcher and the interviewees have different ethnic backgrounds. Interviewees may feel uncomfortable when they were being interviewed by an interviewer with a different ethnic appearance. Song and Parker (1995) found that during in-depth interviews, both interviewers and interviewees encountered difficulties and dilemmas when they had different genders and ethnic identities. In future research, inviting coauthor may be a solution to reduce the difficulty of inviting the Black Lives Matter participants. Second, the offline Black Lives Matter movement reached its peak in 2014-2015 after Michael Brown's death (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). The recent Black Lives Matter offline movements may not be as prevalent as before. As the movement

dissipates, it is harder to find research participants. The movement has experienced some negative media exposure and this may have disrupted the growth and sustenance of the movement/ For example, Fox News even attacked Black Lives Matter as a “murder’ movement” and a “hate group” (Hanson & Simon 2015). The reputation of the Black Lives Matter movement may make the movement participant feel hesitated to make themselves connected to the movement.

Second, for the whole network research, only 50,000 tweets were examined for Women’s March and Black Lives Matter. The samples may not be representative for all the social media data of these two movements in a long-term. Future studies will need to use a big data approach to study larger samples.

A third limitation is in the size of the ego-network survey of Knox Blue Dots. This organization has only 50 active members and I did not collect enough samples. The ego network of Knox Blue Dots may be incomplete because of small sample size. I will continue to collect data from Knox Blue Dots after the dissertation is completed to get a large enough sample size to analyze the network.

Fourth, in the all movements’ survey, the bridging dimension of social capital was not included in the model because inclusion of the variable reduced the model fit. In the research, social movement participants’ social movement engagement activities were only examined at the individual level. This is a disappointing exclusion from the model because bridging “occurs when individuals from different backgrounds make connections between social networks” (Williams, 2006, p. 597). The bridging networks are better for creating connections with external assets from different social networks (Putnam, 1995). Questions were asked how did they interact with others in their movement engagement process. For the majority of movement

participants, they only focused on one movement. It is more likely that they had interactivity with individuals within their social movement groups (the bonding dimension of social capital), rather than the individuals in other social movement groups (the bridging dimension of social capital).

Future Research

This dissertation attempted to answer questions about engagement in social movements. The findings suggest that public relations has important roles in creating the conditions in which social movement members have mutually beneficial relationships with other members in the movement. Social media are not a panacea for activism. For national and international social movements, social media engagement of all the social media users create large and loosely-connected social movement networks online with weak ties that can hardly generate substantial policy changes and high level of social capital. For social movements that are more localized and with a small number of members, individuals have more closely related relationships and see personal development and contribution to the group. To facilitate long-term relationships within social movement groups, practitioners need to improve interpersonal relationships and strong ties within social movement groups and make members aware of their impacts on society.

Future research should explore the bridging social capital in more depth to identify ways that could facilitate social movement participants' cooperation with other movements with three levels of social movement engagement and facilitate intergroup bridging social networks in social movements.

Final Thoughts

Early research suggested that social movements required face-to-face communication (e.g., Snow et al., 1980) or mediated communication (e.g., Garrett, 2007) for movement

mobilization and coordination. With the rise of social media, scholars believed that social movements had become mediated actions or connective actions (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014; Lee, Chen, & Chan, 2017).

The research data indicated that social movements, both national and local ones, use social media to make individuals connected and allow individuals to have heterogeneous networks. For the national level movement, the number of people who engage in offline engagement using face-to-face communication is far less than the people who engage in social movements digitally by using on likes, shares, and comments. Through the mixed method research, I found that social media technology facilitates the individuals' awareness of social issues, allows people to connect to each other, accelerates the information diffusion, and provides opportunities for self-expression. However, for national and international social movements, numerous participants involve in of social media discussion. These large-scale social movement online networks tend to have loose connections and low network density (see the examples of BLM and WM). "Weak ties more often are short-term relationships" (Kiecker & Hartman, 1994, p. 466). The loose connections and weak ties in social media network tend to be short-term relationships (Bennett, 2005). Weak and diverse has limited capacity to influence policy (Sommerfeldt & Yang, 2017). Therefore, social media engagement that tends to be loosely connected and one-time communication can barely help social movement organizations achieve their long term goals and substantial social changes.

Social changes are not easy to be achieved. Many social movements need long-term commitment and efforts rather than one-time participation. Many social changes require the evolution of individuals' social values and beliefs (Mundy, 2013; Sison, 2017), behaviors (Van Rooij, 2010), policies, legislation, and regulations (Servaes & Malikhao, 2010), and even

political structure change or infrastructural changes. Therefore, for social movement organizations and practitioners, they need to solve the issue of member retention. How can social movement practitioners motivate individuals to contribute to a movement group for the long term? The all movements' survey results found that relational engagement and societal engagement have significant impacts on the production of social capital bonding. In other words, closely interpersonal relationships within a group produce stronger in-group social capital. When individuals perceive the impacts of their social movement actions on society and become more aware of social issues their social capital within the group could be enhanced.

Sutcliffe et al. (2018) said that “strong ties were perceived as providing more emotional and informational support than weak ties” (pp. 228-229). Sutcliffe et al.'s (2018) statement indicated that creating strong ties within social movement groups give members more emotional support. In this research, I found evidence that the local social movement group, Knox Blue Dots, had a denser network online and maintained more closely related interpersonal relationships offline with regular book clubs, meetings, and socials. The members perceived the organization as a “support group.” When members in a group see their personal development (e.g., self-confidence, friendship) and more personal impacts on social issues, they tend to have close in-group social capital (bonding) and feel willing to become a member of the group in the long-term. This research finding is consistent with Kiecker and Hartman's finding (1994) that “the majority of strong ties also are long-term relationships” (p. 466).

It is essential for us to rethink the power of social media engagement. Indeed, social movement organizations can create awareness, attention, and participation, but it is hard to maintain long-term relationships in social media in the long-term. Strong ties and interpersonal relationships need to be cultivated offline with dialogues, conversations, caring, and make people

feel rewarded. It is time for us to reemphasize the importance of face-to-face communication and interpersonal relationship for social movement again.

In the past many years, public relations practitioners have been perceived as persuaders (Hutton, 1999), organization-public relationship managers (Ferguson, 1984; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), practitioners who aim at symmetrical relationships (Grunig, 1992), crisis managers (Coombs, 2012), cultural intermediaries (Curtin & Gaither, 2005; Zaharna, 2001), rhetoricians (Heath, 2006), meaning co-creators (Botan & Taylor, 2004) and many other roles. How should we perceive public relations practitioners' roles in social movements? We may perceive practitioners as meaning negotiators and network facilitator in the network who aim at negotiating relationships among different parties and facilitate social changes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide

Thank you for your participation today. Your name and personal information will be confidential in the final report. May I record our conversation?

1. Can you tell me about yourself? What kind of characteristics makes you different from others? [Concept: identity-driven motivation]

a. Probe: Which social group do you believe you belong to? [Concept: identity-driven motivation]

2. In general, which kind of socio-political issues are you interested? [Concept: cause-driven motivation]

3. Why do you think these socio-political issues are important to you? [Concept: cause-driven motivation]

4. Did you participate in any collective actions about these socio-political issues? [Concept: social movement engagement]

5. How did you know the information about the collective action? Who and what influenced you in the collective actions? [Concept: network-driven motivation]

a. Probe: (If from personal network) Can you tell me a little bit more about your friend/acquaintance/relative/neighbor/colleague? (What kind of social ties do you have?) Do you often talk about socio-political issues together? [Concept: network-driven motivation]

b. Probe: (If from organization-public network) Can you tell me more about why do you think the organization is attractive to you to follow? What is the key feature that makes the organization different from others? How did the organization talk about the collective action? [Concept: network-driven motivation]

6. Can you tell me what your understanding of the objectives of the collective actions is?

[Concept: Meaning co creation]

a. Probe: What are the most appealing characteristics of the collective action to you?

[Concept: Meaning co creation]

b. Probe: How did you describe the objectives of collective actions to your friends offline? Do you still remember how did you comment on this collective action online? [Concept: Meaning co creation]

7. Can you describe what happened in the collective actions? [Concept: social movement engagement]

a. Probe: What is your role in collective action? [Concept: social movement engagement]

b. Probe: What did you do for the collective action? How did you contribute to the collective action? [Concept: social movement engagement]

c. Probe: How about other participants? Did they have a specific task arrangement during the collective action? What is your comment on their performance? [Concepts: social movement engagement]

8. In general, what other collective actions did you participate in the past five years? [Concept: social movement engagement]

9. What reasons motivate you to participate in this collective action?

a. Probe: What are your personal reasons to join in collective action? [Concept: Motivation of social movement engagement]

b. Probe: What are the incentives or rewards you think you can get from participating in collective actions? [Concept: reward-driven motivation]

c. Probe: What meanings do you think the participators of the collective action attached to their participation? [Concept: Meaning co creation]

10. How would you describe your relationship with other social movement participants?

a. Probe: Do you work together on some tasks in the process of organizing the collective action? How did you work together? [Concept: how individual activists cooperate with the other individual activists]

11. After participated in the collective actions, have you perceived any changes in your life?

a. Probe: do you feel the objectives of the collective actions have been achieved? [Concept: outcomes of social movement engagement—facilitate social change]

b. Probe: After participating in the collective action, any change occurred regarding your socio-economic concern? [Concept: outcomes of social movement engagement—facilitate social change]

12. To yourself, did the collective actions give you any impacts? [Concept: outcomes of social movement engagement]

a. Probe: After participating in the collective action, have you still kept the relationship with the people you knew from the collective action? [Concept: outcomes of social movement engagement—social capital]

b. Probe: Have you seen any impacts of the collective action on your everyday work/study/life? [Concept: outcomes of social movement engagement—facilitate social change/ social capital]

13. Will you continue participating in collective actions in the future? [Concept: social movement engagement]

a. Probe: (If the interviewee wants to participate) What reasons motivate you to engage in collective actions consciously? [Concept: Motivation of social movement engagement]

b. Probe: (If the interviewee does not want to participate) What are the reasons to leave? [Concept: Motivation of social movement engagement]

14. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding yourself and your collective action experience? [Concept: social movement engagement]

Thank you for your participation! Your interview is important to my research. If you have any question about the study, feel free to contact me.

Appendix B: All Movements' Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study!

You will now be asked a series of questions. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. You will see a total of 23 main questions. This survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

To begin, please click “→” to the bottom right.

Question 1 (Filter question): Have you engaged online or offline in a social movement in the past five years?

1. Yes:
2. No (Add a skip logic: go to the end of the survey)

Question 2 (Type of social movement, Independent variable): Please select one of the social movements you have involved the most in the past five years?

1. Anti-war movement (e.g., Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out)
2. Religious movement (e.g., Christian Coalition of America, Kopimism)
3. Environmental movement (e.g., Greenpeace, Sierra Club)
4. Feminism/Women's rights movement (e.g., Women's March, Time's Up, Me Too)
5. Labor movement (e.g., Labor Day Parade)
6. LGBTQ movement (e.g., Pride March)
7. Patriot movement (e.g., ACT for America, American Identity Movement)
8. Political progressive movement relevant (e.g., Blue Dots, Indivisible)
9. Racial identity relevant movement (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Chicanos Por La Causa)
10. Other, please specify _____

Question 3 (Level of activism, Independent variable) Please select the activities you have participated in the social movement you selected above. Select all that apply.
Tindall, 2002; Tindall, Cormier, & Diani, 2012)

1. I donated money to my social movement organization/group.
2. I wrote a letter to government officials, companies, or organizations regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports.
3. I signed a petition to support my social movement organization/group.
4. I attended a community meeting that organized by my social movement organization/group.
5. I attended a rally or a protest demonstration to support my social movement/organization/group.

6. I participated in an information campaign about the issues that my social movement organization/group supports
7. I made a presentation and/or gave a lecture on issues that my social movement organization/group supports.
8. I participated in news conferences/media relations activities regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports.
9. I served as a representative on an advisory board regarding the issues that my social movement organization/group supports.
10. I purchased a book, t-shirt, poster, mug or other merchandise from my social movement organization/group.
11. Other activities, please specify _____

Question 4. (Length of membership, Independent variable) In which year did you become a member of your social movement? Please enter numbers below.

Year _____ Month _____

Question 5: (Willingness to participate in future social movements) In the long term, will you continue involving in your social movement?

1. Yes (You will skip to Question 9)
2. No (You will skip to Question 6)
3. Not Sure (You will skip to Question 8)

Question 6: When did you stop participating in your social movement?

Year _____ Month _____

Question 7 (Reasons for leaving a social movement) To what extent did the following factors enter into your decision to discontinue your social movement? (Seven-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”)

Strongly disagree --- --- Neutral --- --- Strongly agree

1. I am busy with my family and work.
2. I am no longer interested in the social movement.
3. I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities.
4. The goals of my social movement were vague.
5. The goals of my social movement have changed.
6. I do not like the people who were involved in my social movement.
7. Other, please specify _____

Question 8: (Reasons for feeling uncertain about a social movement) To what extent did the following factors prevent you from engaging in your social movement in the future? (Seven-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”)

Strongly disagree --- --- Neutral --- --- Strongly agree

1. I am busy with my family and work.
2. I am no longer interested in the social movement.
3. I am now more engaged in other social movements or community activities.
4. The goals of my social movement were vague.
5. The goals of my social movement have changed.
6. I do not like the people who were involved in my social movement.
7. Other, please specify _____

Please answer the following questions about the online and offline information channels of your social movements.

Question 9 (Lower-tier informational engagement/ Independent variable): How often have you shared information and updates *about your social movement* with others in the following ways?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Texts _____					
Phone calls _____					
Face-to-face conversations _____					
Door-to-door recruitment _____					
Distributed flyers and booklets _____					
Attended group meeting/group social _____					

Question 10 (Lower-tier informational engagement/ Independent variable): How often have you talked to the following individuals *about your social movement*?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Friends _____					
Coworkers/colleagues _____					
Family _____					
Members in your social movement group _____					
People with opposing views _____					

Question 11 (Lower-tier informational engagement/ Independent variable): How important are the following information resources *to get your social movement information*? (Seven-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”)

Strongly disagree --- --- Neutral --- --- Strongly agree

Online news outlets are important social movement information sources to me.

Social movement organizations’ newsletters are important information sources to me.

Social movement organizations’ official websites are important information sources to me.

Question 12 (Lower-tier informational engagement/ Independent variable): When you were involved in the social movement, in a typical month, how often have you gained the information about your social movement in the following *social media platforms* in the following ways?

Please write down a number below for each line.

I gained information from Facebook ____ times a month.

I gained information from Instagram ____ times a month.

I gained information from Twitter ____ times a month.

I gained information from Pinterest ____ times a month.

I gained information from Snapchat ____ times a month.

Question 13 (Lower-tier informational engagement/ Independent variable): When you were involved in the social movement, in a typical week, how often do you conduct the following social media behaviors when seeing your social movement information? Please write down a number below for each line.

I liked on my social movement information _____ a week

I used emotional reactions to social media _____ a week

I shared my social movement information via social media _____ a week

I commented on social media _____ a week

Please answer the following questions about the personal relationships with the people you have known from your social movements.

Question 14: (Mid-level relational level engagement/independent variable) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding your *interpersonal relationships* when you were involved in your social movement.

Strongly disagree --- --- Neutral --- --- Strongly agree

1. I had ***personal conversations*** with other participants in my social movement outside of the activist activities (***Dialogue***).
2. ***My opinions were heard*** by other participants in my social movement (***Voice***).
3. I trusted other participants in my social movement (***trust***).
4. I had reciprocal relationships with other participants in my social movement (***reciprocity***).
5. I was ***satisfied*** with my relationships with other participants in my social movement (***satisfaction***).
6. I felt ***emotional closeness*** (e.g., sharing of personal feelings, caring, affirmation, and accompanied by expectations of understanding) with other participants in my social movement (***Emotional closeness*** in the relationship).
7. I was likely to maintain ***long-term relationships*** with other participants in my social movement (Long-term relationships).

Question 15: (Higher-tier societal engagement/independent variable) Please indicate the extent to which do you agree with the following ***outcomes*** of your current or past social movement engagement.

After I participated in my movement/activist group,

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Neutral | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|
1. I had more social awareness on a variety of social issues.
 2. I was more aware of fighting for my benefits, rights, and interests in society.
 3. I was more aware of other people's benefits, rights, and interests in society.
 4. I was more aware of diversity in society.
 5. I tried to align my personal activist goals with the shared goals of my social movement.
 6. I felt rewarded personally.
 7. I felt rewarded to achieve the group's collective goals.
 8. I felt have contributed the well-being of society.
 9. I did NOT think the other group members and I have sufficient collective actions, shared knowledge, or emotional connections in my movement.
 10. I have NOT seen immediate improvements in the quality of life of my community or my social activist group after my participation.
 11. After a period of time, I have NOT seen any significant impacts or changes in social movement/activist group in society.

Question 16: (Self-perception of social capital/dependent variable, Williams, 2006, Cited more than 1,040 times; dependent variable) Please indicate the extent to which do you agree with the following ***outcomes*** of your current or part social movement engagement.

Strongly disagree --- --- Neutral --- --- Strongly agree

1. Interacting with people in my movement/activist group made me feel connected to the bigger picture (**Bridging** subscale 1).
2. Interacting with people in my movement/activist group made me interested in things that happen outside of my community (**Bridging** subscale 2).
3. Interacting with people within my movement/activist group made me feel like a part of a larger social community (**Bridging** subscale 3).
4. Interacting with people within my movement/activist group made me want to try new things (**Bridging** subscale 4).
5. There were several people in my movement/activist group I trust to help me solve my problems (**Bonding** subscale 1).
6. There was someone in my movement/activist group I can turn to for advice about making very important decisions (**Bonding** subscale 2).
7. If I needed help in an emergency, I knew someone in my movement/activist group I can turn to (**Bonding** subscale 3).
8. When I felt lonely, there were people in my movement/activist group I can talk to. (**Bonding** subscale 4).

Please answer the following demographic questions.

Question 17: How old are you? _____

Question 18: What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Transgender or Other, please specify _____
4. Prefer not to answer

Question 19: What race/ethnicity do you most closely identify with?

1. White
2. Black or African-American
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian
5. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
6. Other, please specify _____

Question 20: Which of the following best describes your education?

1. Less than high school degree

2. High school degree / GED
3. Some college
4. Associate degree in college (2-year)
5. Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
6. Master's degree
7. Doctoral
8. Professional degree (JD, MD)

Question 21: In which state do you currently live? (Insert a list of all the states)

Question 22: In which area do you currently live? (Washington State Department of Health, 2016, p. 12)

1. Urban (areas 50,000 persons or more)
2. Suburban (areas with high commuting relationships with urban core areas)
3. Large town (towns with populations between 10,000 and 49,999)
4. Small town/ rural area (towns with populations below 10,000)

Question 23: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? (This is the question and categorization in Qualtrics Library)

1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent
4. Other, please specify _____
5. No preference

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this survey!

Appendix C: Ego-network Survey

Construct	Item	Response scale	Source
Consent Form	Consent Form Survey flow: [Branch If: I would NOT like to participate” is selected -> Go the Incentive introduction page.]	I consent to participate in this study (1) I would NOT like to participate in this study (2)	
Introduction	Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. It is important you give your full attention to these questions. It is better to use your laptop or desktop to take this survey. You will answer a total of 31 main questions and approximately will take 10-20 minutes to complete. To begin, please click “→” to the bottom right.		
Qualifier	Do you identify yourself as an active member of the Knox Blue Dots? * An active member means you participated in Knox Blue Dots’ activities (e.g., book club, meeting, social events, postcard writing, Facebook group interactivities) in the past six months. [Survey flow: Branch If “no” is selected --> Go the Incentive introduction page.]	[Multiple Choice, Single answer] (1) Yes (continue) (2) No (to the end of the survey)	

Appendix C: Ego-network Survey (Continued)

Ego Measures			
Ego Membership Similarity	Please indicate your membership in the following groups or the movement. Select all that apply: 1. Indivisible 2. Moms Demand Actions 3. Women's March in Knoxville 4. Women's March in Washington D.C. 5. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) 6. Other, please specify _____	[Multi-select option]	Information from qualitative research
Social Issue Similarity	Please indicate the degree to which you consider the importance of the following social issues to you: 1. Education 2. Environment protection 3. Equality for all groups 4. Gun violence prevention 5. The election of Democratic candidates 6. Voting rights 7. Women's rights 8. Other social issue that is crucial to you. Please specify	[Likert-type scale] Not at all important (1) ... Neutral (4) ... Very important (7)	Information from qualitative research

Appendix C: Ego-network Survey (Continued)

Preparedness Name Generators			
Name Generator	Please identify the people who you have interacted <i>the most in the Knox Blue Dots</i>. Please only list the number of people you can think of. <u>Please write their first names only in the space below. Please do NOT enter their last names. If two people have the same first name, use the first letter of each person's last name.</u> Please list as many names as necessary. The first name or initials you provide here will be replaced with pseudonyms in the dissertation and journal publication.	Name of person 1 (1) Name of person 2 (2) Name of person 3 (3) Name of person 4 (4) Name of person 5 (5)	Specific terms: Perry & Pescosolido, 2010 General guidance: Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013; Carrington & Scott, 2011
Name Generator (Cannot Recall)	If you cannot think of anyone who you have interacted the most in the Knox Blue Dots, please indicate below.	I cannot think of anyone in Knox Blue Dots (1). If “I cannot think of anyone” is selected, go to the last block of questions (demographics).	

* Only a part of the ego network survey is listed here.

Table 2.1. Engagement Authors, and their Conceptualization, Operationalization

Author	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Doerfel & Taylor (2017); Kent & Taylor (2002); Taylor, Vasquez & Doorley (2003); Taylor & Kent (2014);	Engagement is “the third feature of dialogic propinquity. Dialogic participants must be willing to give their whole selves to encounters (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26). Axiologically, engagement provides a solution to improve organization–public communication, creates a form of participation for publics in socio-political issues, and maintains subsequent relationship building (Taylor, Vasquez & Doorley, 2003). Engagement is also perceived as an approach to create social capital and further help foster civil society (Taylor & Doerfel, 2003). “Engagement is both an orientation that influences interactions and the approach that guides the process of interactions among groups” (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 384).	Engagement scales include an index measure of cooperation, equivocality and civil society partners (Doerfel & Taylor, 2017).

Table 2.1. Engagement Authors, and their Conceptualization, Operationalization
(Continued)

Author	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Johnston (2010)	Community engagement is “a key strategy to incorporate representative community opinions into decision making” (Johnston, 2010, p. 1).	Community engagement can be classified into four categories: community information, community consultation, community participation, and pseudo engagement.
Bortree (2011)	In this research, involvement and engagement were used as the synonym. Bortree (2011) argued that “the greater involvement or engagement with volunteer activities leads to positive outcomes for teens, including community belonging and social responsibility” (p. 45).	Involvement and engagement were used as the synonym in this study. The concept of involvement was measured by Zaichkowsky’s (1985) twenty semantic differential measures.
Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton (2012)	Social media engagement enables real-time feedback about organizational announcements and encourage the users to engage in conversations with organizations.	On Twitter, the number of tweets, hyperlinks to external information, use public messages, use retweets, and use hashtags.

Table 2.1. Engagement Authors, and their Conceptualization, Operationalization
(Continued)

Author	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Cho & De Moya, 2016; Cho, Furey, & Mohr (2016); Cho, Schweickart, & Haase (2014)	Social media engagement is achieved through publics' engaging with organizational messages, such as like, share, and comment (Cho et al., 2014; 2016). Community engagement is seen as a strategy of organizations. Community engagement is the practices of a wide range of people working together to achieve shared goals and to solve issues that affect their well-being (Cho & De Moya, 2016).	The study measured public engagement with organizational messages through Facebook at three levels <i>like</i>, <i>share</i>, and <i>comment</i>.
Men & Tsai (2013a, 2013b)	Communicating with publics through social media enables users to engage with the brand by commenting on the brand, expressing their likes and dislikes, and sharing the content with their social connections.	Public engagement with SNS pages can be measured at three levels: <i>consuming</i> content, <i>contributing</i> to the page content, and <i>creating</i> user-generated content.

Table 2.1. Engagement Authors, and their Conceptualization, Operationalization**(Continued)**

Author	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Kang (2014)	Engagement is “an affective motivational mediator that leads individuals’ trust and satisfaction (key antecedents) to be displayed in supportive behavioral intentions for an organization (loyalty and positive word-of-mouth; WOM) (pp. 399–400).	Identified engagement with three dimensions of affective <i>commitment</i> , <i>positive affectivity</i> , and <i>empowerment</i> , and measured public engagement with 13 items.
Yang & Saffer (2018)	Digital engagement of publics and organizations can range from passive activities (e.g., read posts) to active activities (e.g., generate conversations).	Digital engagement is operationalized as the experiences of organizations and stakeholders interacting or exchanging messages (Yang & Saffer, 2018).

Table 4.1. Qualitative Research Theme Summary

Shared Themes		
between Two Movements	Women's March	Knox Blue Dots
RQ1: Meaning Co-creation of Two Social Movements		
Direct trigger	Reaction to the presidential election	Reaction to the presidential election
Movement attribute	Support for women's rights and celebration of women's achievement	Create a group with likeminded people
Profound concern for the movement causes	Reactions to other social problems	Reactions to other social issues.
RQ2a: Motivations of Social Movement Engagement		
Self-level	Following personal value system	NA
Other-oriented	Create positive impacts on others	Educate local citizens
Societal level	Being present, taking a civic role, and making statements	Support for a variety of issues
Network-level	Involving in unity	Build a local community with likeminded people

Table 4.1. Qualitative Research Theme Summary (Continued)

Shared Themes		
between Two Movements	Women's March	Knox Blue Dots
RQ2b: Outcomes of Women's March Engagement:		
Individual level outcomes	Personal development and disappointment	Facilitate personal development Build a likeminded
Community and network level	Find a like-minded community and create networks	community and cultivate long-term relationships
National Level	Create changes in the political climate	Get a better political climate.

Table 4.2. Two Movements' Network Features

Graph Metric	Women's March	Black Lives Matter	Knox Blue Dots
Overview			
Sample Size of Tweets	50,000	50,000	1,304
Unique Edges	40,520	26,118	2,339
Edges with Duplicates	9,685	11,385	5,246
Total Edges	50,205	37,503	7,585
Nodes	33,802	19,632	906
Graph Density	0.000037	0.000073	0.005
Maximum Geodesic Distance	19	16	6
Average Geodesic Distance	5.50	5.30	2.70
In-Degree			
Average In-Degree	1.28	1.44	4.25
Out-Degree			
Average Out-Degree	1.28	1.44	4.25
Centrality Measures			
Average Betweenness Centrality	88961.06	55251.98	1536.11
Average Closeness Centrality	0.13	0.11	0.003
Average Eigenvector Centrality	0	0	0.001
Clustering Coefficient			
Average Clustering Coefficient	0.08	0.06	0.23

Table 4.3. Top In-degree Actors in Three Movements

Top In-degree Actors in WM	In-Degree	Top In-degree Actors in BLM	In-Degree	Top In-degree Actors in KBD	In-Degree
Shireen Qudosi (@ShireenQudosi)	3467	Paul Joseph Watson (@PrisonPlanet)	1672	Knox Blue Dots (@KnoxBlueDots)	481
Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump)	1738	Fox News (@FoxNews)	1658	TN Democratic Party (@tndp)	231
Lil' Kim-berly Ms. G.O.A.T (@killerbee805)	1331	Shepard Smith (@ShepNewsTeam)	615	Storm old profile (@StormResist)	159
Scott Dworkin (@funder)	1247	Nathan Allen Pirtle (@workwthecoach)	379	NashvilleResist (@NashvilleResist)	137
Women's March (@womensmarch)	1104	Terry Everett (@CleanMy_Sprite)	359	Moms Demand Action (@MomsDemand)	112
The Hill (@thehill)	663	Democrats for Trump (@YoungDems4Trump)	319	Phil Bredesen (@PhilBredesen)	101
Amy Mek (@AmyMek)	625	WORLDSTARHIPHOP (@WORLDSTAR)	312	Turn Tennessee Blue (@UniteBlueTN)	92
Anika Zufelt (@anikaamarieeee)	451	Deante' Hitchcock (@DeanteVH)	300	Bristol Indivisible (@BristolIndivis)	90
we're going to pass AVR (@SeanMcElwee)	439	Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton)	277	Marsha Blackburn (@VoteMarsha)	88
CNN (@CNN)	362	CNN (@ CNN)	237	Morpheus Resists (@WomanResistorNC)	68
Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton)	342	Linda Suhler (@LindaSuhler)	230	WCTNDEMOCRAT	63
YouTube (@YouTube)	301	AJ+ (@ajplus)	220	Green Roots (@GreenRootsTN)	61

Table 4.3. Top In-degree Actors in Three Movements (Continued)

Top In-degree Actors in WM	In-Degree	Top In-degree Actors in BLM	In-Degree	Top In-degree Actors in KBD	In-Degree
Jesse Williams (@iJesseWilliams)	282	GodGuns&Trump (@PatriotByGod)	216	Knox County Dems (@KnoxDems)	59
Michael Moore (@MMFlint)	219	@SandraTXAS	210	Gloria Johnson (@VoteGloriaJ)	57
President Trump (@POTUS)	215	Katie Pavlich (@KatiePavlich)	207	TN House Democrats (@TNDemocrats)	55
Linda Sarsour (@lsarsour)	187	AppSame (@AppSame)	201	Davidson County Dems (@nashvilledems)	51
Mark "Beto" Pantano (@TheMarkPantano)	186	Ash J (@AshAgony)	198	Hamilton County Democratic Party (hcdp_us)	40
Nancy Pelosi (@SpeakerPelosi)	177	President Trump (@POTUS)	180	Bimmerella (@bimmerella)	39
ACLU (@ACLU)	162	Francesca Ramsey (@chescaleigh)	175	@ Jordan4SenateTN	38
Cecile Richards (@CecileRichards)	161	deray (@deray)	169	Indivisible_TN (@indivisibletn)	34

Table 4.4. Top Retweeted Posts, Top Mentioned Accounts, and Top Replied-to Accounts in the Knox Blue Dots' Network

Time of Top Retweeted Posts	Retweet Count	Top Mentioned	Top Mentioned Accounts in the Network	Description of the Top Mentioned Twitter Account	Counts	Top Replied-to Accounts	Description of the Top Replied-to Twitter Account	Counts
11/3/17 17:16	12036	@thehill https://t.co/v1B1THW1a0	TN Democratic Party (@tndp)	The official Twitter feed of the Tennessee Democratic Party. Fighting for an economy that puts Tennessee's working men and women first.	27	TN House Democrats (@tndemocrats)	The TN House Democratic Caucus represents the Democratic members of the #TGA who fight for working families in TN. RTs/likes should not be read as endorsements. Nashville, TN	6
11/8/17 1:37	5952	Marsha, true friend of drug co's that distribute pain pills devastating TN communities. #unfittolead #opioidcrisis https://t.co/rGr0ovH11D	Knox Blue Dots (knoxbluedots)	Building Community & Changing the political culture in TN = Organize Engage Educate Ac	22	John Ray Clemmons (@jrclemmons)	TN Rep. John Ray Clemmons, Candidate for Mayor 5 of Nashville, Attorney	5

Table 4.4. Top Retweeted Posts, Top Mentioned Accounts, and Top Replied-to Accounts in the Knox Blue Dots' Network

(Continued)

Time of Top Retweeted Posts	Retweet Count	Top Mentioned	Top Mentioned Accounts in the Network	Description of the Top Mentioned Twitter Account	Counts	Top Replied-to Accounts	Description of the Top Replied-to Twitter Account	Counts
3/22/18 17:07	2714	Great reception in Knoxville! Thank you #KnoxBlueDots, @KnoxDems and my friend @VoteGloriaJ #tnsen https://t.co/vZyYiJcH0t	TN House Democrats (@tndemocrats)	The TN House Democratic Caucus represents the Democratic members of the #TGA who fight for working families in TN. RTs/likes should not be read as endorsements.	19	Susan Jennings (@susanjennings8)	A member of Knox Blue Dots	5
11/8/17 8:21	798	@TopherSpiro No question @James_Mackler can absolutely win as demonstrated tonight as he brought a packed house to their feet for extended ovation! https://t.co/T3NhHBD3hl	John Ray Clemmons (@jrclemmons)	TN Rep. John Ray Clemmons, Candidate for Mayor of Nashville, Attorney	18	Snarky Yeti (@snarkyyeti)	N/A	4
3/27/18 8:31	680	@RickStaplesKnox If you need volunteers, announce it on Knox Blue Dots Fb group!	Susan Jennings (@susanjennings8)	N/A	16	Green Roots (@greenrootstn)	Tennessee environment sustainability political theory history culture arts greenrootstn.wordpress.com	2

Table 4.4. Top Retweeted Posts, Top Mentioned Accounts, and Top Replied-to Accounts in the Knox Blue Dots' Network

(Continued)

Time of Top Retweeted Posts	Retweet Count	Top Mentioned	Top Mentioned Accounts in the Network	Description of the Top Mentioned Twitter Account	Counts	Top Replied-to Accounts	Description of the Top Replied-to Twitter Account	Counts
9/25/18 7:48	264	James Mackler with the Knoxville Blue Dots (10/5/17) https://t.co/4GojcfwxsR via @YouTube	SisterKim (@mixdcurls)	N/A	16	TN Democratic Party (@tndp)	The official Twitter feed of the Tennessee Democratic Party. Fighting for an economy that puts Tennessee's working men and women first.	2
10/25/17 10:21	194	@HFrankable https://t.co/V67tjugYXW	JBforSenate-Jamie Ballinger (@jbforsenate)	As the Senator for TN District 7, I will make sure that all Knoxvilleans and Tennesseans can safely learn, live, and work. Election Day is November 6. Knoxville, TN • jamieballinger.com	13	Andy Holt (@andyholt4tn)	Christian, husband, father of 6 incredible children, unapologetic conservative, farmer, State Rep. For Tennessee's 76th District, Budget Sub. Chairman. Holt Family Farms, Dresden, TN • AndyHolt4TN.com	2

Table 4.4. Top Retweeted Posts, Top Mentioned Accounts, and Top Replied-to Accounts in the Knox Blue Dots' Network

(Continued)

Time of Top Retweeted Posts	Retweet Count	Top Mentioned	Top Mentioned Accounts in the Network	Description of the Top Mentioned Twitter Account	Counts	Top Replied-to Accounts	Description of the Top Replied-to Twitter Account	Counts
4/1/18 16:05	181	@James_Mackler @KnoxDems @KnoxYoungDems The hits keep coming as Rep Rick Staples continues the O-trend ... its feeling like a Catholic Sunday up in here. https://t.co/TvqPZaY5az	Moms Demand Action (@momsdemand)	Join our grassroots movement of Americans demanding reasonable solutions to address our nation's culture of gun violence. @MomsDemand is a part of @Everytown.	13	Kathleen Coffen (@kathleencoffen)	N/A	2
5/26/18 12:41	161	A concern of @faithpromise using FHS was the perception of the school endorsing & advertising a specific church. Here's a 30' long example. https://t.co/y5wvrcSOrN	Knox County Dems (@knoxdems)	Turning East TN BLUE! The Official Twitter account of the Knox County TN Democratic Party #KnoxDemsStrong Knox County Tennessee • knoxvilledemocrats.org	10	Knox Blue Dots (@KnoxBlueDots)	Building Community & Changing the political culture in TN = Organize Engage Educate Ac	2
4/9/18 20:52	152	Women. Are. Badasses. https://t.co/EH8MA6EuYR	Storm old profile (@stormresist)	N/A	10	CamD (@cd_mur)	wife, sister, retired teacher, cat feeder Knoxville, TN	2

Table 4.5. Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Results
Hypothesis 1 a: The awareness dimension of societal engagement positively influences bonding social capital.	Supported
Hypothesis 1 b: The impact dimension of societal engagement positively influences the bonding dimension of social capital.	Supported
Hypothesis 1 c: Relational engagement positively influences the bonding dimension of social capital.	Supported
Hypothesis 1 d: Offline informational engagement positively influences the bonding dimension of social capital.	Supported
Hypothesis 1e: Online informational engagement positively influences the bonding dimension of social capital.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2a: Relational engagement positively influences the awareness dimension of societal engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 2b: Relational engagement positively influences the impact dimension of societal engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 3: Offline informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.	Rejected
Hypothesis 4a: Online informational engagement positively influences offline informational engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 4b: Online informational engagement positively influences relational engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 4c: Online informational engagement positively influences the awareness dimension of societal engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 4d: Online informational engagement positively influences the impact dimension of societal engagement.	Rejected
Hypothesis 5a: Social movement participants who have higher societal level social movement engagement would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.	Partly Supported
Hypothesis 5b: Social movement participants who have higher mid-level relational social movement engagement would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.	Supported
Hypothesis 5c: Social movement participants who have higher offline informational engagement would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.	Rejected
Hypothesis 5d: Social movement participants who have higher online informational engagement would engage in future social movement activities than the participants who would leave future social movements or feel unsure about future engagement.	Rejected
Hypothesis 6: For different types of social movements, individuals have different willingness to participate in future social movement activities.	Rejected

Table 4.6. Measurement Items, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Variables in the Hypothesized Model.

Variables/Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Online Informational Engagement		0.88
I liked on my social movement information.	0.60	
I used emotional reactions to social media.	0.78	
I shared my social movement information via social media.	0.94	
I commented on social media.	0.97	
Offline Informational Engagement		0.75
Door-to-door recruitment	0.69	
Distributed flyers and booklets	0.83	
Attended group meeting/group social	0.62	
Relational Engagement		0.87
I had personal conversations with other participants in my social movement outside of the activist activities (dialogue).	0.73	
My opinions were heard by other participants in my social movement (voice).	0.79	
I trusted other participants in my social movement (trust).	0.74	
I had reciprocal relationships with other participants in my social movement (reciprocity).	0.80	
I was satisfied with my relationships with other participants in my social movement (satisfaction).	0.78	
Societal Engagement (Awareness)		0.87
I had more social awareness on a variety of social issues	0.76	
I was more aware of fighting for my benefits, rights, and interests in society.	0.79	
I was more aware of other people's benefits, rights, and interests in society.	0.80	
I was more aware of diversity in society.	0.70	
I tried to align my personal activist goals with the shared goals of my social movement.	0.68	
I felt have contributed the well-being of society.	0.65	
Societal Engagement (Impact)		0.85
I did not think the other group members and I have sufficient collective actions, shared knowledge, or emotional connections in my movement (reversed).	0.66	
I have not seen immediate improvements in the quality of life of my community or my social activist group after my participation (reversed).	0.88	

Table 4.6. Measurement Items, Factor Loadings, and Reliabilities of Variables in the Hypothesized Model (Continued)

Variables/Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
After a period of time, I have not seen any significant impacts or changes of social movement/activist group in society (reversed).	0.89	0.90
Social Capital (Bonding)		
There were several people in my movement/activist group I trust to help me solve my problems.	0.83	
There was someone in my movement/activist group I can turn to for advice about making very important decisions	0.86	
If I needed help in an emergency, I knew someone in my movement/activist group I can turn to.	0.85	
When I felt lonely, there were people in my movement/activist group I can talk to.	0.80	

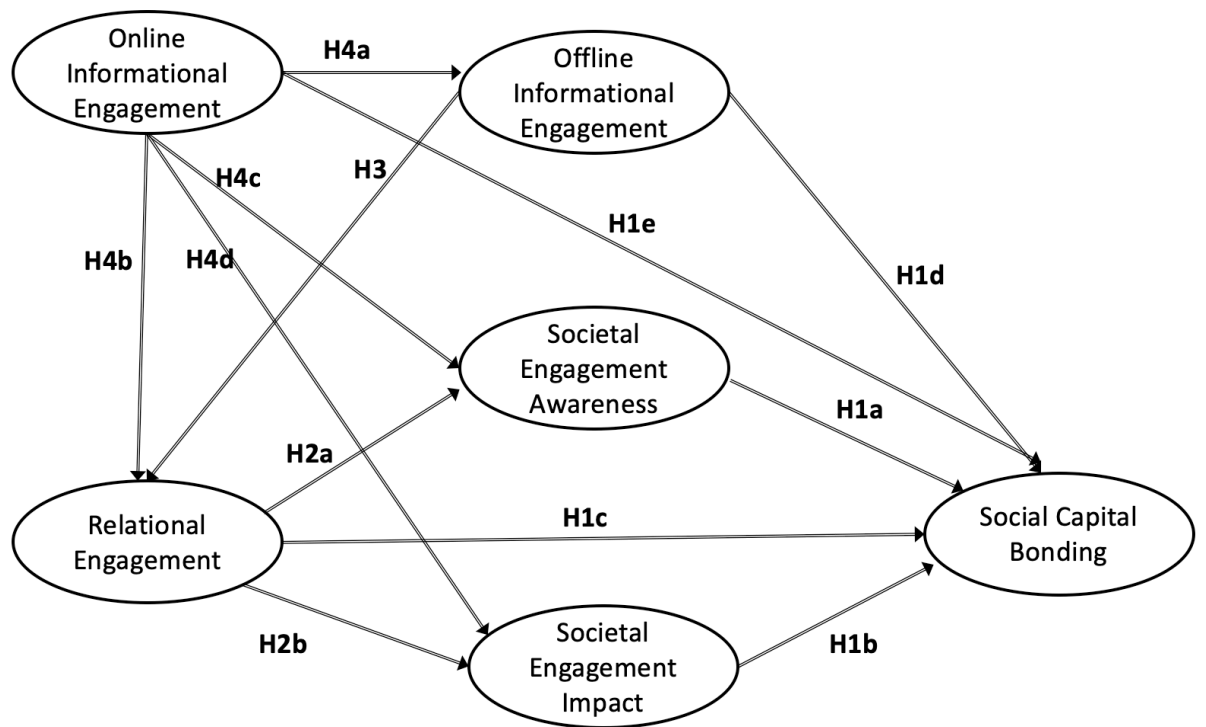
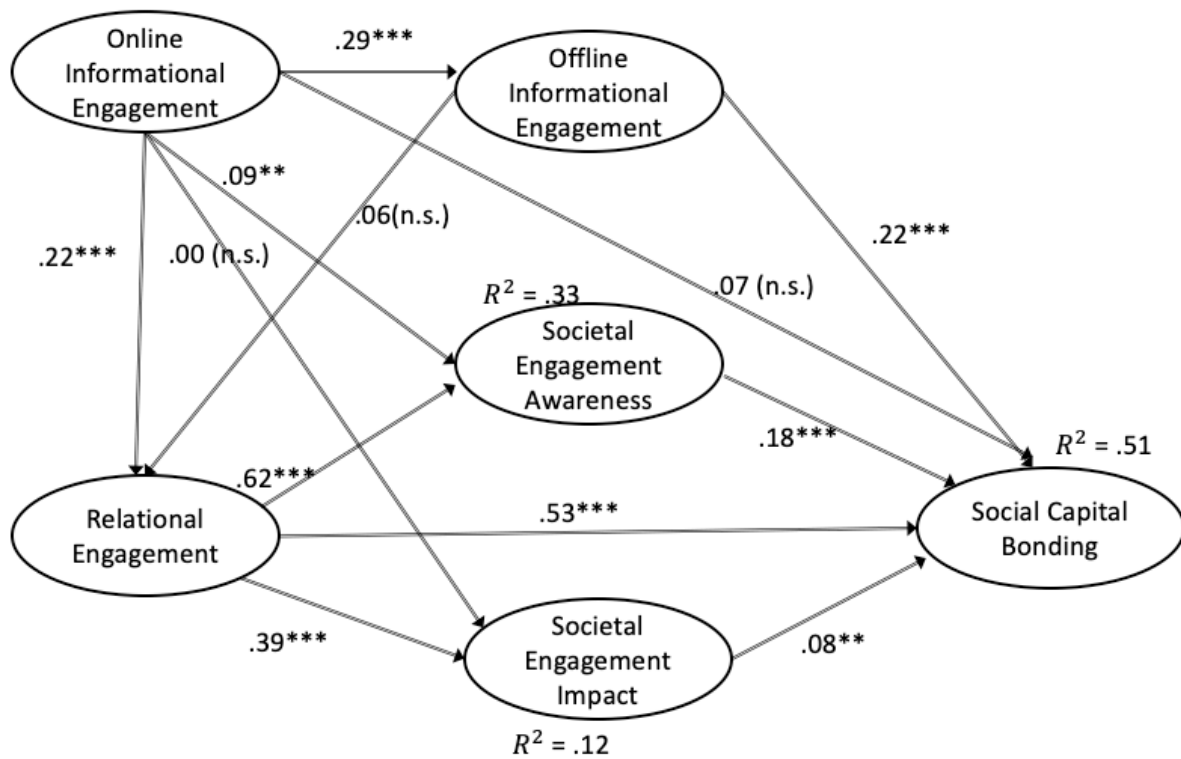


Figure 4.1. Proposed Social Movement Engagement Model and Hypotheses.



*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

Figure 4.2. Social Movement Engagement Model

VITA

Ying Xiong was born in Wuhan, China. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in advertising from Huazhong University of Science and Technology in 2011. She received a Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations from Huazhong University of Science and Technology in 2014 and a Master of Arts in Strategic Communication from the University of Oklahoma in 2016. Her public relations research has focused on social movement engagement, social media analytics, networked community, and crisis communication.