Social media offers youth a virtual platform to build community with those who share similar experiences. Moreover, it provides opportunities for marginalized teens’ voices can be heard, valued, and privileged. Using case study methods, I examined how marginalized youth used social media platforms to engage in autonomous and agentive literacy practices in online contexts to advocate for social justice. In particular, this multi-case study examined six individual teens, the cases in the study, through a cross-case analysis of their social media literacy practices centered on their racialized experiences in their lived worlds across platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube. This research also positions youths’ engagement in online literacies as part of the intricate identity work of minoritized youth. Findings show that teens enacted literacy practices in social media spaces, related to their racialized experiences and unique perspectives as young people of color in similar, different, and contradictory ways, which shaped their identities, shown through cross-case themes: (1) More Than Race: Marginalized Teens' Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces; (2) Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens' Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements; and (3) We the People: Marginalized Teens use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism. Thus, this research holds the potential for contributing to what literacy educators and scholars know about how teens of color navigate social media spaces using literacies in ways that promote their autonomy and agency. Implications include suggestions to teachers for privileging multimodal literacies, cultivating opportunities for youth to write for change in online spaces, fostering opportunities for youth to engage as advocates, having critical conversations surrounding race and the racialized experiences of BIPOC.
individuals, and engaging in antiracist teaching grounded in inclusive literacies and equity and socially just practices.

*Keywords:* multimodal literacies, digital literacies, social media literacies, online literacy practices, antiracism, race and identity
#ONLINELITERACIESMATTER: A MULTI-CASE STUDY APPROACH OF BLACK AND BROWN YOUTHS’ LITERACY PRACTICES IN SOCIAL MEDIA SPACES

by
Dominique Skye McDaniel

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro

2022

Approved by

______________________________
Dr. Amy Vetter
Committee Chair
DEDICATION

In dedication to the memory of Michelle Lynelle Banks.

My mother, best friend, and angel.
This dissertation written by Dominique Skye McDaniel has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank the many individuals who contributed in various ways to this dissertation study. To my dissertation committee, thank you for your guidance and support. To my Chair, mentor, and advisor, Dr. Amy Vetter, thank you for being the calm to my storm, having a disposition that eased me, encouragement that kept me going, and being just as excited about my dissertation study as I was from the start to finish. Your guidance came with no judgment, just down-to-earth conversations, and pure support. To Dr. Melody Zoch, for being genuinely invested in me, from my time as a UNC Greensboro Masters’ student, to meeting me the summer before my first semester as a doctoral student at Barnes & Noble in Friendly Center, to now, your investment in me is greatly appreciated and still such a prominent symbol of your consistent support. Also, thank you for representing the BIPOC community so well. To, Dr. Wayne Journell, thank you for being the rockstar of my committee, for shaking things up a bit by bringing a Social Studies Education lens to a majority literacy and English Education space, for your invaluable perspectives and insights, not only as a committee member, but as a professor of three dynamic courses I took as a doctoral student, and for always responding to my emails, no matter when I sent them. Finally, to Dr. Gay Ivey, thank you for your wisdom, expertise, your experience, and steadfast commitment to ensuring I was ready to take on the world of academia and making me feel that it was okay to do it, with style.

In addition to the dissertation committee members, I want to give a special thank you to two faculty members, Dr. Barbara Levin, for preparing me for this long ride and her early support, and to Dr. P. Holt Wilson for his mentorship, authentic nature, and support during the latter, more recent stage of this journey.
To the dynamic Black and Brown (Dominican, Mexican/Ecuadorian) teens in this study, Tatum, Dakari, Samirah X, Laura, Camila, and Johnavan, thank you for sharing your literacy, social media, and personal lives with me. I am inspired by your activism, advocacy, and allyship to marginalized communities, both on and off online spaces. You are the future, and the future is so bright.

To WSFCS, for being my education home for ten years, to my MMS family at Meadowlark Middle, thank you for supporting my decision to pursue my doctoral studies full-time as I gained much-needed teaching experience through my Graduate Assistantship, and to my former students, I will always remember how you made me feel like a rockstar of a teacher. Thank you for inspiring me and teaching me what is really important in life.

To my close friends who feel like family, Mrs. Joann Boswell, Mrs. Shantell Bradley, Mrs. Beth Cumbo, Mrs. Anita Justice, Mrs. Melissa Merritt, and the Sisoukraths, namely Mouay, Sunya, and Claire, thank you for believing in me, even when I doubted myself. I appreciate all the words of encouragement that came through texts, phone calls, emails, in-person conversations, lunch dates, and late-night get-togethers. You sure know how to make a girl feel special, loved, and supported. To many other friends, family, classmates, colleagues, and faculty members who have impacted me in some way or another along in my journey, thank you.

To my angel Paris, my beloved dog of 16 years who passed away before the end of this journey, which I still grieve the loss of, thank you for being there for me throughout the majority of this process. I miss you stepping over my papers during those late-night writing sessions. I miss you dearly and hope you are proud of me.

To the love of my life, Jerry who has been a constant source of support during this process. I cannot imagine completing this without you. Thank you for always showing
confidence in me, for picking me up, sometimes literally, for being my peace, for making me feel like the smartest girl in the world, and for reminding me that it is supposed to be difficult because if it were not, many more people would have a Ph.D. I am indebted to you forever. I love you, Boobie.

Finally, to the memory of my mother, Michelle Lynelle Banks, who only had the pleasure of seeing me graduate once, as a young undergraduate getting her Bachelor's degree, now two degrees later, as a woman receiving her Ph.D., I know you are beyond proud of me. It is my privilege to honor the most fashionable, best dancing, fun mom; thank you for cheering from above, being my strength, inspiration, biggest role model, and my "rock." I love you forever.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

If a person is faced with racism as a “joke,” offensive remark, stereotype, or discrimination, I would speak up and stand up for that person. I think racism isn’t okay, and if I see it happen, there is no doubt I will take action. On a community level, the racism I see in the world is violent, and it’s happening all around the world. The racism is getting worse and worse, and it needs to stop. The actions I am taking are posting on social media, mostly every day, with an inspirational black quote or a writing from me speaking up on what’s going on in the world. I am writing a story about a boy facing racism, and I want to publish and finish it by 2021! - Johnavan

This dissertation shares the stories of Black and Brown youth engagement with literacies in social media spaces. This study was inspired by my work with young people of color during my pilot study, where I facilitated a critical literacy workshop for marginalized youth over the pandemic. Using case study methods, I examined how marginalized youth in the summer workshop engaged in literacy identity work through counterstorying and how that counterstorying helped them make sense of societal representations of race and culture. I discussed suggestions to teachers that included embracing the culture of marginalized youth, related explicitly to allowing youths' authentic lives into the classroom. One of those youth who participated in the camp, which ran as a virtual culturally responsive literacy workshop, was Johnavan, a participant in the pilot study and in this current study, whose statement above from a one-on-one interview highlights his perspectives and experiences on how he used social media literacies to cope with racism and injustices towards Black people on a community and societal level.

For Johnavan, Instagram redefined for him what it meant to be a reader and writer, to connect through experiences of shared pain and trauma, and to take action. Thus, this teen interpreted a social media platform as his stage to advocate for social justice for Black and Brown people, using unsanctioned literacies that many classrooms disregard as unsophisticated,
simple, or insignificant. These *underdog literacies*, which I describe as unaccepted and unrecognized literacies, are often not regarded as high-quality literacy in schools. These literacies seem to dominate unsanctioned spaces, such as social media platforms where youth are employing them in sophisticated, complex, and unique ways as they engage in tweeting, hashtagging, commenting, and multimodal posting, sharing, and composing. For Johnavan, who was denied placement in an Academically Gifted (AG) level Language Arts class because he was considered a student who would struggle with advanced reading and writing content, Instagram afforded him the possibility to engage in complex literacies. In online spaces, he enacted literacies towards advocacy, an advanced practice.

This interview with Johnavan revealed how meaningful social media could be for youth, particularly youth of color, to communicate, compose creatively, and be courageous. For Johnavan, Instagram served as not just a social media platform but a sounding board for grappling with being a young Black male, the blatant and subtle racism in his personal life, and the lives of other Black individuals (i.e., victims of police brutality, racial injustice, and racism), receiving the national spotlight at the time. Additionally, Johnavan turned to social media to advocate for social justice. Besides posting and sharing multimodal compositions, Johnavan engaged in other literacies such as posting pictures, videos, and audio; commenting and hashtagging across the network space; and sharing his perspectives and experiences through traditional and multimodal text. I share this experience to illustrate how for youth of color, who are often represented as struggling readers, writers, and having deficits in literacy in schools (Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006; Valdes, 1997), are successfully enacting literacies in social media spaces. While online, they take charge of their
own literacy experiences, acting as agents for social change and rewriting the dominant narrative that portrays them inaccurately.

As a former English language arts middle school teacher and as an undergraduate literacy course instructor, I wondered about all the literacies youth experienced online, literacies that youth themselves initiated, and the potential hidden gems they engage in, such as online spaces youth informally occupy in their everyday lives. How do the racialized experiences and literacies of youth of color operate within social media spaces, and with the absence of school or school-like settings, teachers, facilitators, instructors, and coaches? Hearing my previous students talk about their everyday experiences online, referring to social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, changed the following: (a) my approach to what literacy was; (b) my perspective on what youth were doing when not in my presence; and (c) allowed me to move beyond thinking teens needed direction, support, or organization to develop agency, advocacy, and action-oriented practices.

I also considered how K-12 literacy educators could tap into the literacies that youth of color engage in within social media spaces. Specifically, I wondered how teachers might miss opportunities to draw on these literacies occurring in online contexts due to the structure of traditional teaching spaces that potentially hinder, instead of foster, autonomy and agency. In most schools, there is an intense presence of inequitable systems of high-stakes testing. Thus, teachers are often forced into these traditional, school-based values based on how they and their students are assessed. As a literacy instructor, I wondered about the transformation required of school systems when evaluating students and educators and the changes literacy teachers and practitioners could consider valuing these digital and multimodal literacies and creating a classroom environment conducive to youths' online literacies specifically within social media.
This shift is similar to the changes in literacy research as to what counts as literacy, how different scholars define literacy, and what place social media and digital literacies have in literacy scholarship and practice (Alvermann, 2010; Gee, 2000; Gee & Hayes, 2011a; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

The possibilities for what youth are doing on and with social media should be valued, accepted, and upheld as literacy. Social media offers youth of color a platform, a virtual space to advocate for social justice, engage in activism, and serve as agents of social change. Here, they build community with other users as they enact social media literacies to grieve, protest, and resist the status quo. Through multimodal literacies such as tweeting, uploading, posting, and sharing, they use mediums and modes such as GIFS, memes, captions, emoji’s, pictures and videos, and texts. For example, in the interview with Johnavan, he shared that he follows various accounts of well-known public figures such as celebrities, music artists, and athletes. He carefully watched their content associated with social justice movements, mentioning hashtags, pictures, and texts centered on *Black Lives Matter*, pointing to *Justice for George Floyd* and *I Can't Breathe*, *Justice for Breonna Taylor*, and others highlighting how these people took on social justice issues using social media. I argue that this work is literacy work because youth use social media to create, communicate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and seek to understand what is going on in a society they live in. Also, this engagement online is literacy work because youth are reading and writing in new ways, using social media to forge advanced and innovative possibilities for composing. When Johnavan hashtagged *Black Lives Matter* (i.e., #BLM), he was engaging in literacy. Specifically, he was contributing to advocacy efforts in his unique way. Johnavan explained how he felt validated when he noticed people he followed on Instagram doing the same, such as athletes and celebrities, and those he knew personally, such as peers and
students in his middle school, making sure to mention that even his White friends were using
social media to call attention to social justice issues.

I argue that youth of color, often positioned as uninterested in literacy in schools,
participate in digital, multimodal, and agentive literacies with great expertise as they engage in
unsanctioned spaces, such as social media. This study provided an opportunity to understand (a)
how minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enacted literacy practices in social
media spaces related to their racialized experiences; and (b) how those literacy practices within
the context of social media shaped the identities of Black and Latinx youth.

Statement of the Problem and Significance of Research

Race has, and will always remain, one of the most notable identity markers employed in
the United States to denote individuals' differences (DiAngelo, 2006; DiAngelo & Allen, 2006;
Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006). Critical theory, in particular
BlackCrit and LatCrit (Arreguín-Anderson et al., 2018; Bell, 1995; Dumas, 2016; Dumas &
Ross, 2016; Valdes, 1996), have argued minoritized people are subject to institutionalized
racism, social inequities, and racism, therefore speaking to how Black and Brown youth are
historically marginalized. Youth of color experiences in and outside of schools drive me to
consider the spaces they turn to, thrive in, and use in such a way that changes the narratives that
unreasonably depicts them. Thus, I sought out an opportunity to position social media literacies
as worthy of the literacy label, calling for a more inclusive way to define literacy, especially a
literacy that youth of color show interest in and can be engaged with in new ways.

While not yet a common topic, there has been a recent increase in discussion of the
unsanctioned literacies Black and Brown youth are taking on (Patterson, 2017, 2018). However,
this trend in research has not entirely captured the literacies that occur in uniquely organized and
filtered online spaces without a facilitator or instructor. Overall, there is an opportunity to expand this discussion to include social media contexts. There is room for extension in the extent and intensity of works committed to this topic within social media spaces, where youth's advocacy initiates agentive literacy practices for social justice.

Additionally, a gap exists in the scholarly literature about how Black and Brown youths' experiences grounded in their race influence their identities, literacies, and perspectives beyond schooling and school-like contexts. Since Black and Brown youth have been marginalized, their perspectives need to be foregrounded, not just in traditional educational spaces but also in their lives, both on and offline. A filling of this gap is vital because, as Johnson (2018) explains, there is a need to take a critical approach, explicitly thinking about teaching literacy in today's present-day justice movement. For example, Johnson (2018) insists, "to disrupt racism, the structures, policies, and procedures that uphold racism must be named and unveiled. Teaching about white supremacy, whiteness, and anti-blackness is not for the faint of heart. It takes a deep level of critical consciousness and awareness of social and racial injustices against oppressed communities" (p. 109). Thus, Johnson (2018) is intentional in his efforts to make students' literacy experiences in schools more socially conscious. He goes on to state, "this requires teachers who aren't afraid to resist the school-sanctioned language, literacy, and writing curriculum" (Johnson, 2018, p. 109), arguing the importance of bringing "present-day cultural movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #BlackIsBeautiful, #BlackGirlMagic, and #BlackExcellence" into English/Language Arts classrooms (p. 109). Hence, anti-racism, equity, and social justice orientations towards English education and language and literacy connect to new approaches to redefine what counts as literacy. This study adds to this notion by offering a look into Black and Latinx youth online literacies occurring on social media and how their
practices highlight the need for a shift in how educators and scholars are serving the needs of Black and Brown youth. Transformations with culture in mind require researchers and educators to consider drawing from their lived experiences to inform shifts in teacher and scholar mindset, curriculum, and pedagogical practices (Johnson, 2018).

The problem that this dissertation research study sought to address is twofold. First, this study sought to address the issue of what counts as literacy, specifically in relation to literacies practiced on social media. This study attends to spaces that have typically been neglected and left out of the conversation of high-quality learning spaces. Much of the literature reviewed attended to informal educational spaces such as camps, afterschool or summer programs, and community learning centers (Aguilera & Lopez, 2020; Greene, 2016; Kinney, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), where youth were being directed in some way. This study valued how youth serve as their own instructors, facilitators, and coaches on these social media platforms, where they have full autonomy; therefore, their agency takes precedence over direction and guidance from adults in any role of power. By doing so, I add to research that attempted to fill gaps in existing research by inquiring into the literacy practices and experiences of youth of color within the context of social media spaces and explored how those literacy practices shape their identities in unsanctioned online spaces (Patterson, 2017, 2018; Skerrett, 2010, 2011; Skerrett & Bomber, 2011). Overall, this study sought to understand how minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx, engaged in literacy practices online, referred to in this paper as social media literacies, towards social justice.

Second, this study sought to address the problem related to understanding the experiences and perspectives of youth of color through their literacy work in spaces outside of school...
(Greene, 2016; Haddix et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016). Specifically, this study investigates how minoritized youth enacted literacy practices related to their racialized experiences and how those literacy practices shaped their identities as young people of color in today's racially charged society. This study's context, separating itself from other studies, is situated within how youth of color engage in this work with full autonomy, guided only by their personal agency and advocacy across social media platforms. Thus, this study sought to understand how minoritized youth enacted agentive literacies in response to their racialized experiences and how those practices shaped their identities as people of color in today's society.

Although previous research in this area has begun to address these problems, there is a need for additional research that explores youth of color as expert literacy users in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces. Ultimately, such research holds the potential for contributing to what literacy educators and scholars know about how youth navigate social media spaces using literacies in ways that promote their autonomy and agency. Further, by exploring both problems, this research contributes to understanding how youth of color use literacies in their everyday lives on social media to negotiate their racialized experiences and those of people of color. Additionally, this research provides some insight into educators and what aspects of literacy they value and teach in the classroom. In sum, this study highlights the perspectives and experiences of marginalized youth within social media spaces who engage in using language in online spaces to make changes in their society, a view rarely heard.

**Research Question and Sub-Question**

The purpose of this study was to understand how youth of color engage in literacy practices on social media platforms and the ways in which they enact literacies in response to their racialized experiences. Additionally, this study sought to understand how those online
literacy practices shaped the identities of Black and Latinx youth. Overall, this study illustrated how Black and Latinx teens engaged in literacies online to examine how they used social media literacies to advocate for social justice, highlighting their racialized experiences to do so. Data analysis for the study occurred in two phases. In phase one, I discussed each case (i.e., youth) separately. These youth were chosen based on their social media presence and interest in engaging and composing with and through social media literacies. For this study, I sought everyday youth who were not well-known social media personalities in online spaces. This focus helped me understand how everyday youth of color utilized literacies through social media and how their engagement in these online spaces reflected their racialized experiences and shaped their identities. In phase two of the data analysis, I took a cross-case approach, honing in on the similar, different, and conflicting, contradictory ways the six teens in my study employed social media literacies, paying particular attention to patterns, trends, uncertainties, and other conundrums within the data collected. Specifically, I was guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences?
   a. How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?

Consequently, teens in the study engaged in (a) making sense of the intersections of marginalized identities in social media spaces; (b) activism, action, and allyship through social media literacy; (c) and reimagining the society they lived in and a new framework of government through social media literacies. This study shows how Johnavan, who continued in this study and other teens of color, participated in advocacy efforts in online spaces and used language to make
changes in society, a view we seldom hear. Thus, this dissertation focused on the social media literacy practices of Black and Brown youth, where I examined the intersections of literacy and racialized experiences of six teens, individually and collectively.

**Definition of Significant Terms**

This section aimed to call attention to the terminology I used in the presentation of this research. I provide the following definitions to clarify how I used these terms within the study.

**Social Media**

For this study, I refer to social media as an aspect of digital and multimodal literacy, adding to other online spaces. Social media refers to the websites and internet-based applications (apps) that allow users to create and share content, such as text, posts or comments, digital photos or videos and participate in social networking. Social media platforms allow individuals to engage in multimodal literacies that consist of text, images, filters, hashtags, and feedback such as likes, comments, or direct or private messages (Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Talib, 2018). Thus, social media fills young peoples' daily lives, as they frequently use it for various reasons through smartphones and mobile apps. This term refers to how youth communicate through photos, videos, and text and share information (Talib, 2018). The context of social media adds to the significance and timeliness of this study since the pandemic extended the amount of time young people spent online, making it necessary to better understand the ways in which they interacted in an ever-changing social media landscape.

**New Literacies**

Refers to the theoretical approach that conceptualizes literacy (Alvermann, 2004, 2010; Gee, 2000; Gee & Hayes, 2011a; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Moje, 2009) as an alternative way of thinking about reading and writing, referring to a social practice
rather than a traditional notion of decoding and encoding printed texts. This study refers to new literacies to describe the changes in how we read and write text. It also integrates how technology advances literacy. In this study, this term also refers to digital and multimodal literacies and youth's online practices.

**Educational Spaces**

This terminology identifies educational settings beyond school and school-like spaces (i.e., camps, afterschool programs, clubs, and summer programs). For this study, I argue that educational spaces are not limited to school settings by positioning online spaces such as social media platforms as educational contexts where literacies are present. The literature briefly highlighted social media as a pedagogy to apply an interdisciplinary approach to teaching multimodal literacies (Talib, 2018), aligning with my argument that social media is an educational space that affords youth ways to use and create new multimodal literacies. This study attempts to fill the gaps in the literature, contributing to how social media could be considered an educational setting where youth engage in literacy practices.

**Unsanctioned Spaces**

Refers to spaces where youth are not being directed, facilitated, and are not under educators' guidance or instructor-like presence. These spaces and literacy practices, organized and filtered in unique ways, are situated where youth are not under any power dynamic, authority, or traditional learning or doing. In addition, I use this term to describe literacies that generally do not have the approval or consent from those with power that traditionally hold authoritative stances, such as teachers, administrators, and district stakeholders. In other words, the term *unsanctioned* refers to the literacies that youth enact, which may be deemed unauthorized and unapproved by literacy educators or by the status quo. Additionally, these
spaces refer to youths’ engagement and practices when they do not engage in or operate in organized, traditional ways (Black, 2005, 2009; Desai, 2006; Moje, 2000, 2004; Patterson, 2017, 2018; Skerrett, 2011). To some, unsanctioned spaces and literacies may appear to be places or spaces for deviant, inappropriate behavior or acts of resistance (Moje, 2000). However, I position them as sophisticated contexts and practices where youth have complete autonomy and act off personal agency. This study sought to understand the affordances of unsanctioned literacy spaces and practices for youth of color within this work.

Identity

Identity is the self-understanding of who you are. This understanding is not static and develops over time, shifting, evolving, depending on the context. For this study, I use this term to indicate an individual's online identities (Black, 2005, 2009), identities of marginalized individuals on digital platforms and social media settings (Greene, 2016; Haddix, Everson, & Hodge, 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016; Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Patterson, 2017, 2018), unsanctioned literacies, and minoritized individuals identities (Desai, 2016; Moje, 2000; Kirkland, 2009; Skerrett, 2011), and how youth of color negotiate, mediate, and construct their identities (Haddix, 2017; Price-Dennis, Muhammad, Womack, McArthur, & Haddix, 2017; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis, 2014).

Race

For this study, the term race is used to indicate an individual's racial ancestry. I use this term to identify a part of one's identities, taking a social perspective to race to speak to antiracism by dismantling racial superiority and White privilege, ideologies of racism (Yosso, 2006). I draw from Yosso's (2006) conception of race as a socially constructed category used by society to create a hierarchy to separate and differentiate groups based primarily on skin color,
phenotype, ethnicity, and culture in ways that show superiority or dominance of one group, usually White, over another, usually marginalized groups such as Black and Latinx individuals.

**Racial or Racialized Identity**

I use this term to indicate the meanings attached to the racialized understandings of self and others. Here, I focus on youths’ identities grounded in race (Yosso, 2006) instead of other identities, such as class, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, language, and ability, among other identity markers.

**Marginalized and Minoritized**

I use this term to denote groups who have been historically marginalized, such as Black (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016) and Latinx (Arreguín-Anderson et al., 2018; Valdes, 1996; Valdes, 1997; Yosso, 2006) individuals. Marginalized groups are synonymous with minoritized individuals, who are not White, middle-class, and Standard American English-speaking, and are often marginalized in society as outsiders who are unimportant, insignificant, and more subordinate in society's status (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006).

**Overview of the Dissertation**

Before the spotlight on the injustices towards people of color, social media engagement looked different for Johnavan. As stated, Johnavan turned to social media to engage in literacies that helped him express his experiences and perspectives about race relations, social justice, and advocating against acts of racism towards Black people. This study aims to understand how youth of color create and engage in literacies within the context of social media platforms and how their racialized experiences shape their literacy practices. The purpose of this section is to provide the organization of the study. This dissertation includes seven chapters and appendices.
Chapter I provides background on the literacies youth of color employ in online spaces and the influence of their racialized experiences and identities. Further, I provide a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, including the research questions, and a definition list of key terms.

Chapter II draws on three theories to construct a critical framework that contextualizes and guides my research. Specifically, I describe how Critical Race Theory (CRT), paired with Black Critical Race Theory (BlackCrit) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), is utilized as a triangulation of critical frameworks to explore how Black and Latinx youth engage in literacy practices online. Doing so positions me to highlight how teens of color reflect on their perspectives, racialized experiences, and intersecting identities in social media spaces.

In Chapter III, I review relevant past research focusing on digital literacies and youth online literacy lives. Specifically, I review what previous research tells us about new literacies, explore what counts as literacy, precisely how multimodal literacies are valued and fostered, and review what is known about youth of color literacy practices in online spaces. Furthermore, I integrate literature on social media and literacy, paying particular attention to teens' social media use, including their engagement in social media spaces and social media as a literacy employed by youth. In doing so, I identify a gap in past research, suggesting a need for studies that address the two research questions and sub-questions I posed in the Introduction. Thus, in Chapter III, I refer to the literature related to broad notions of literacy, Black and Brown youth literacies in various contexts, spanning from in and out of school, the place of social media in teens' literacy experiences, and literature in the field that reflects the need for this research.

In Chapter IV, I share the methodology for this study, a collective case study, also known as a multicase study design, and why it is the best fit for this research. Next, I discuss my
positionality and researcher's bias. Then, I describe the participants and offer further descriptions in phase one of the findings. Next, I highlight the context and site of the study, followed by a description of the data collection and analysis techniques, including a two-phase case study analysis, individual narratives of each case, and a cross-case analysis. Finally, I end Chapter IV by addressing the trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

Chapter V highlights the findings from phase one of the study, which sought to understand: How do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences, and How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth? Organizationally speaking, in this chapter, I introduced the six teens in detail, each one just before their case analysis, as a way to highlight their voices and experiences as the unique people of color they are. This layout also offered a way to separate the six narratives presented in Chapter five. In highlighting the participants' voices, I described how individual teens advocate for social justice on social media. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thick description, in the form of narratives, of the ways the cases (i.e., individual youth) in my study enacted literacies on social media. Since this study included multiple case studies of individuals, I was afforded opportunities to highlight the uniqueness of participants' voices. Within phase one, I described the perspectives and experiences the youth draw on to tap into their autonomy, personal agency, and sophisticated and complex ways to engage in literacy online, specifically social media, in critical ways. Cases were written thematically for each teen, highlighting three themes teens' individually employed. Narratives of individual teens' from this phase were then analyzed and used as the basis for developing the study's cross-case themes in the following chapter. Chapter
six analyzed how teens’ narratives overlapped, paying particular attention to commonalities and conundrums to create broad cross-case themes.

In Chapter VI, I focused on the collective, shared experiences of six teens, and shared the findings from phase two of this study through a cross-case approach, which addressed the following research questions: How do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences. How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth? The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the similarities, differences, and contradictory ways teens in the study engaged with social media literacies to advocate for change and social justice. I focused on the patterns and trends, uncertainties, and conundrums among youth in their agency and advocacy efforts shown through their online literacy practices. Throughout the chapter, I discussed the degree to which teens of color literacies aligned with each other and how their racialized experiences and identities, woven throughout their advocacy efforts, occurred on social media. Three cross-case themes highlighted in this chapter include: (a) More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces; (b) Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements; and (c) We the People: Marginalized Teens use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism.

To conclude, in Chapter VII, I discussed the contribution this study makes to existing research, specifically addressing how the study confirms, adds to, and contradicts literature. I argued that this study redefines what counts as literacy, paying particular attention to social media literacies used by teens to advocate for social justice. Next, I summarize the findings of the study, presented in Chapters V and VI. Then, I discussed the literacy practices of teens of
color on social media, highlighting their perspectives and experiences, often grounded in race. Next, I discussed how these social media literacies practiced by Black and Latinx teens shape their identities. Towards the end of the discussion, I call attention to BlackCrit and LatCrit, where I discuss how the findings contribute to the theoretical frameworks that guided this study, analyzing how BlackCrit and LatCrit explain the study’s conclusions while connecting these theories from Chapter II to what the findings of this study offer. Last, I conclude with implications for future research and classroom practice, offering potential future directions for the application of this work by practitioners, research scholars, and teacher educators.
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses the theoretical framework for this study. First, I discuss why I focus on race and the definition of race I draw from for this study. Second, I address how race and culture impact minoritized adolescents' literacy experiences in social media spaces by providing a brief overview of the two tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT): Black critical race (BlackCrit) and Latina/o critical race (LatCrit). Here, I describe the theoretical foundation I used to name and articulate the individual experiences of minoritized people belonging to these cultures regarding their literacy experiences in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces and highlight the definition of culture I take on. Third, I discuss how race and culture are conceptualized within BlackCrit and LatCrit and how that affords me the ability to use CRT paired with BlackCrit and LatCrit as analytical frameworks to assess the racialized experiences and the literacy practices of minoritized students in online contexts, specifically social media platforms. Last, I describe the need for literature to take a critical approach and the importance of researchers to use critical frameworks such as BlackCrit and LatCrit in literacy scholarship where Black and Brown youth are at the center.

Race, Culture, and Critical Frameworks

I focus on racial and ethnic identities because an individual’s race in the U.S. plays a significant part in the learning experiences of youth. I draw from Yosso's (2006) definition of race as a "socially constructed category created to separate and differentiate groups based primarily on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity, and culture to show the superiority or dominance of one group over another" (p. 5). I draw on that definition because it speaks to how human interaction in society is responsible for the social construction of race. I also draw on that definition because it highlights how society adopts a hierarchical perspective by dividing and
discriminating individuals. I also focus on race instead of other identities because there is a social perspective applied to race that lies within the rationalization of "racial superiority and White privilege," which are ideologies of racism (Yosso, 2006). Additionally, intersecting (Crenshaw, 1989; Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Knight, 2002; Mayo, 2007) race with other identities such as class and gender provides opportunities for scholars to analyze how race influences other areas of difference. Aside from intersectionality, discussions centered on race, foster conversations about ethnic identity, which helps to disrupt the status quo, and challenge the existence of systemic dominance by those belonging to White culture. There is a desperate need to move conversations forward, for all people, however most pressing, for White people, about complex issues regarding White privilege, race, White supremacy, and antiracism, which are most urgent (Crowley, 2016; Lensmire et al., 2013; Leonardo, 2002; McIntosh, 1989). Since race is conceptualized in a socially constructed lens, it is easily used to showcase the differences among people in a way that privileges some and disadvantages others (Yosso, 2006). Hence, focusing on race helps to disrupt how one's power and influence over others can perpetuate between individuals. Most importantly, one's race is the basis for identity development in a society that privileges Whiteness (DiAngelo, 2006; DiAngelo & Allen, 2006; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Thus, race is a critical focus area for the educational experiences of marginalized youth. With the abundance of evidence pointing to continued racism in the United States, one may ask, why not focus on race?

In order to address how race and culture impact minoritized youth literacy experiences in social media spaces, I draw on two tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT); Black critical race (BlackCrit) and Latina/o critical race (LatCrit) as the foundation to naming and articulating the individual experiences of minoritized people belonging to these cultures in regard to their
literacy experiences in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces. While there is an abundance of definitions of culture, I draw from Hecht et al. (2003) who define culture as "code, conversation, and community, which categorically subsumes aspects of ethnicity" (p. 4). Authors explain that "code denotes systems of rules and meanings; conversation describes culture as a way of interacting while community denotes membership (Hecht et al., 2003, p. 4). Hecht et al. (2003) further defined culture as "an individual, social, and societal construct” (p. 4). These authors explain the individual level of culture as an aspect of an individual's worldview that is shared in common with others within the group (Hecht et al., 2003). The authors describe the social level of culture as "enacted and maintained" in the conversation between others within the group (Hecht et al., 2003) therefore making culture "a patterned social network with a shared history, traditions, and more" (p. 4). Lastly, on a societal level, Hecht et al. (2003) define culture as being rooted in a "structural variable that characterizes large groups of people as an entity and includes its practices, power dynamics, and institution" (p.4). I applied this definition during data collection, intentionally looking for components of youths' culture in interviews, observations, and artifacts. I also draw from this description of culture in the data analysis phases as I compose individual narratives of teens and write across cases, taking a collective approach.

Since race and culture are conceptualized within BlackCrit and LatCrit, I discuss the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) paired with Black Critical Theory (BlackCrit) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) as analytical frameworks to assess the racialized experiences and literacy practices of minoritized students in online contexts, specifically social media platforms. By examining the social media spaces that youth occupy, I explore how these critical frameworks help me to understand the experiences of Black and Latinx youth, explicitly attending to the literacy practices they engage in online. The pairing of BlackCrit with CRT and
LatCrit has the potential to serve scholarship as scholars better understand factors that impact Black and Latinx youth, providing insight into how these marginalized young people overcome challenges and obstacles related to prejudice and discrimination within and beyond their educational experiences. Critical scholars have combined CRT and LatCrit as two theories that have supported the call to challenge other traditional methodologies and examine Black, and Latinx youths' lived experiences. Although CRT and LatCrit have acknowledged how impactful Blacks and Latinx youth's experiential knowledge are, pairing BlackCrit with CRT presents a strengthened vision in the ongoing quest for scholarly literature to understand and analyze racial subordination and oppression within and beyond educational settings (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is also essential to recognize that Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other People of Color's (BIPOC) experiences are unique.

Adding to the theoretical discussion, because BlackCrit and LatCrit draw from a CRT framework, it is clear they inform further understanding and implications of how race and racism shape marginalized students' out of school experiences, privileging students' voices and perceptions. Together, these specific sub-theories of CRT lead research towards the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Knight, 2002) between race, ethnicity, and culture. BlackCrit and LatCrit theories expose the need for literature to take a critical approach to understand minoritized experiences within and beyond education and how their intersecting marginalized identities play out in these contexts. Researchers and practitioners must engage in listening and learning from minoritized communities multiple ways of knowing, understanding the experiential knowledge of people of color, having a commitment to social justice that challenges the dominant ideology, and centralizing race and racism in discussions about education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2006). Thus, framing the literature review
and this study on these theories allows for highlighting youth perspectives on their own racialized experiences, an exploration into the lived experiences of minoritized youth, and the literacy practices Black and Brown teens engage in towards agency, and advocacy, which are all untapped areas within traditional literacy scholarship, especially in online spaces such as social media.

The next section provides an overview of Critical Race Theory and two sub-theories derived from this critical approach to scholarship, BlackCrit, and LatCrit. Each theory is highlighted separately; after giving an overview of the theory's historical underpinnings and naming seminal researchers attributed to the history of the theory, I highlight how I apply theories to the study’s goals, specifically the purpose of this study. To do so, I speak to how I used BlackCrit and LatCrit to understand the significance of situating racialized experiences and sophisticated literacy practices of Black and Brown adolescents at the forefront of this research.

**Critical Race Theory**

Theoretical foundations of critical race theory originate from a wide field of literature deriving from legal scholarship (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005), specifically critical legal studies (CLS) and other areas such as law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, women’s studies, and education where scholars of color engaged in transforming research by accounting for the role of race and racism. Beyond an extension of critical legal studies (CLS), CRT considers and values the role of race and racism in education. Critical Race Theory is grounded within a framework used to not only examine, but to challenge the multiple ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly shape social structures, practices, and discourses (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005).
Many critical race theorists have shared beliefs about the tenets of Critical Race Theory. For example, Delgado et al. (2012, pp. 6-9) described the six core tenets as:

1. Racism is ordinary and is a normal way in which society operates. It is a common everyday experience of people of color.

2. Racism is often not acknowledged, which makes it challenging to address. The identity race is socially constructed, which means race does not have a biological foundation but was created by the dominant group, Whites, to categorize and oppress others.

3. Differential racialization involves the dominant group, Whites, socially constructing races differently depending on the socio-historical context, making race and racism the effects of social thought.

4. Interest convergence occurs when the oppressing group, Whites, benefit from providing the oppressed group, often members of minoritized communities, with aspects of power or privilege.

5. The presence of a unique voice of color using counternarratives that differ from the socially constructed racial categories created by the dominant group, Whites, are encouraged and valued, providing a space for minoritized groups or marginalized individuals to tell their story is essential.

6. The theory of intersectionality is essential to CRT because intersectionality explains the complexity of social and cultural roles and identities and how these identities assign power, privilege or disadvantage and marginalization.

Another researcher, Yosso (2005, pp.73-74) drew from education scholar Daniel Solórzano (1997, 1998) to describe what she believed to be the five tenets of CRT and applied
them to education specifically to inform the critical race movement in education. Those five themes (Solórzano, 1998, pp. 122-123) included:

1. **The Intercentricity of Race and Racism**: CRT starts from the premise that race and racism are endemic and permanent in U.S. society. A CRT in education centralizes race and racism, while also focusing on racisms’ intersections with other forms of subordination, based on gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, immigrant status, phenotype, accent, and surname.

2. **The Challenge to Dominant Ideology**: Critical race scholars argue that traditional claims of race neutrality and objectivity act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society.

3. **The Commitment to Social Justice**: CRT is dedicated to advancing a social justice agenda in schools and society.

4. **The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge**: CRT finds the experiential knowledge of People of Color legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination.

5. **The Interdisciplinary Perspective**: CRT analyzes racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia from a historical and interdisciplinary perspective.

CRT began as a movement in the law (Bell, 1995; Delgado et al., 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005) evolved from legal studies to a framework that has led to other critical movements, such as LatCrit (Bernal, 2012; Cammarota, 2014; Cooper Stein et al., 2018; Fields et al., 2014; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Valdez, 1996; Yosso, 2005) and BlackCrit (Busey, 2019; Dumas, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Johnson, 2018; Johnson, Gibbs-Grey, et al., 2017). CRT, further conceptualized by the theory’s influence on conceptual frameworks and pedagogical constructs
that followed, such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2014), Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2002), Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), and most recently, McCarty and Lee's (2014) culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy lends itself to scholars who adopt a critical race pedagogy (Garcia, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Martin, 2014). Critical scholars in educational research push forward critical race theory agenda (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1997, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005) and advocate for CRT as it places race at the forefront of critical conversations and dialogue that examines the complex role that race and racism play in the systemic world of education. Hence, I used CRT as an educational framework for this study to apply critical perspectives to the way teens of color engaged with social media literacies.

For this research, I draw from exploring the impact of race and racism within and beyond unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered online spaces. Thus, a critical race theory approach in education analyzes the impact of race and (anti)racism, seeks to understand and explain social inequities, works to counter institutionalized racism experienced by minoritized people, critiques the elements of White supremacy, and centers the role of voice in racial justice (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). Research within this literature has a central goal of dismantling deficit-driven assumptions of minoritized communities, disrupting dominant discourse of race, ethnicity, and power relations, and removing elements of racism that breed systemic injustices. Consequently, supporting a more socially just and equitable educational experience for marginalized individuals.
BlackCrit Theory. An emerging theory, known as Black Critical Theory or BlackCrit (Dumas & Ross, 2016) is a response to Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an attempt to provide a lens to examine, reflect, and act upon Blackness and anti-blackness, the history of marginalized Black people, and the inequitable approach of dismissing Black youth within various contexts in education. The authors aim to advance BlackCrit by specifying how Blackness matters in the conversation about race. Specifically, Dumas and Ross (2016) are particularly interested in using BlackCrit to explain how Black people "became marginalized, disregarded, and disdained, even in their highly visible place within celebratory discourses on race and diversity" (p. 417). To do so, Dumas and Ross (2016, pp. 429-431) explored three foundational ideas that provide broad framings for their concepts of BlackCrit as they specifically examine Blackness and anti-blackness, which included:

1. Anti-Blackness is endemic to and is central to how all of us make sense of the social, economic, historical, and cultural dimensions of human life.

2. Blackness exists in tension with the neoliberal-multicultural imagination.

3. BlackCrit should create space for Black liberatory fantasy, and resist a revisionist history that supports dangerous majoritarian stories that disappear Whites from a history of racial dominance, rape, mutilation, brutality, plunder, and murder.

Calling for a Black centered exploration within race scholarship, BlackCrit scholars Dumas and Ross (2016) aimed to lead the field of CRT beyond its historical roots in widespread racism and racial oppression and work towards the further conceptualizing of BlackCrit. While calling for a new branch of CRT, Dumas and Ross (2016) argued the main difference between CRT and BlackCrit is one that positions the first as a theory of racism and the latter as a theory of Blackness in an anti-Black society. Dumas and Ross (2016) initialized the necessary
scholarship on anti-Blackness in education and described anti-Blackness as the human race's need for violence against Black people. Within theoretical and empirical literature, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was frequently used to emphasize education equity within the Black community, even though its central premise was an overall theory of race and racism. For such reasons, it is necessary to specifically name a BlackCrit approach to studying race, ethnic identity, and Black culture. As Bell (1995) stated in his discussion of systemic racial policies, "the critical race theory perspective offers blacks and their white allies insight, spiked with humor, as a balm for this latest insult, and enables them to gird themselves for those certain to follow" (p. 898).

Extending the conversation much later, Dumas and Ross (2016) described how CRT "speaks to a BlackCrit without explicitly naming or theorizing it" (p. 419). It is clear now that BlackCrit fills a purpose - one that not only addresses but challenges White supremacy and the oppression of marginalized people, namely Blacks -something that has been largely ignored and concealed for far too long - in systemic structures, precisely educational spaces that minoritized youth occupy (Dumas & Ross, 2016).

Furthermore, BlackCrit helps explain precisely how Blacks become marginalized, disregarded, and disdained (Dumas, 2016) in contexts beyond the Black/White Paradigm that CRT assumes. These conversations are evidence that specifying Blacks is necessary within critical theories. It is time for the field to realize that CRT has spoken to BlackCrit without saying so for long enough. Thus, naming BlackCrit as a branch of CRT is essential to make sense of “elements of blackness and anti-blackness” (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 4) within the Black community. Realizing the importance of paying homage to CRT scholars' work, BlackCrit scholars acknowledge that CRT has privileged the experiences of Black people at its beginning; however, it argues the framework could not and should not stand alone for theorizing Blackness
(Dumas & Ross, 2016). Actually, BlackCrit works simultaneously with CRT to convey anti-Blackness issues and study how "Black bodies become marginalized, disregarded, and disdained in schools and other spaces" (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 417). The relationship between BlackCrit and CRT is a symbiotic one.

Without rejecting CRT, scholars Dumas and Ross (2016) provide the research field with space for growth and expansion, specifically geared toward Black people within education and beyond. To extend the broad but critical conversation about race, Dumas and Ross (2016) theorized the need for a more defined framework in which systemic racism, specifically systemic anti-blackness, should be utilized as a lens of reference. In doing so, Dumas and Ross (2016) claimed that BlackCrit is necessary due to CRT's insufficiency in examining issues of anti-blackness (Dumas, 2016). Though BlackCrit is a relatively new framework of inquiry, I chose to theorize anti-blackness with CRT, due not only to its necessity of use within the field of research but also because it offers the capacity of fully contextualizing issues of racism that are specific to Blacks. Also, CRT assumes a "Black/White Paradigm" (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 419), in which Black people become juxtaposed to White people. However, a lot of racial tension within the U.S. involves communities of Latinx and Black people; hence, BlackCrit becomes essential, especially when we, as a field, have LatCrit to reference.

Furthermore, BlackCrit helps explain precisely how Blacks become marginalized, disregarded, and disdained (Dumas, 2016) in contexts beyond the Black/White Paradigm that CRT assumes. These conversations are evidence that specifying Blacks is necessary within critical theories. It is time for the field to realize that CRT has spoken to BlackCrit without saying so for long enough. Thus, naming BlackCrit as a branch of CRT is essential to make sense of elements of blackness and anti-blackness within the Black community. Realizing the
importance of paying homage to CRT scholars' work, BlackCrit scholars acknowledge that CRT has “privileged the experiences of African Americans,” or Black people at its beginning; however, it argued the framework could not and should not stand alone for theorizing Blackness (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p.426). Actually, BlackCrit works simultaneously with CRT to convey anti-Blackness issues and study how "Black bodies become marginalized, disregarded, and disdained in schools and other spaces" (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 417). The relationship between BlackCrit and CRT is a symbiotic one.

There is a call for scholars, within CRT scholarship, to recognize BlackCrit as a theory that draws from the history of CRT and its contributions, and to honor BlackCrit as a new theory by naming and noticing it, even though it has not been used much within the literature as a theoretical framework (Baker-Bell, Butler et al., 2017; Busey, 2019; Johnson, 2018; Johnson, Gibbs-Grey, et al., 2017). Theoretical frameworks like BlackCrit make determined efforts to deal with White supremacy and race, specifically anti-black racism, which are desperately needed in education. Scholars Baker-Bell, Butler et al. (2017), Johnson (2018), and Johnson, Gibbs-Grey, et al. (2017) argued for a Critical Race English Education (CREE), pedagogical approach and framework that has theoretical underpinnings of critical race theory (CRT), Black critical theory (BlackCrit), and critical literacy frameworks. While pushing this emerging theory forward, Johnson (2018) does not intend to replace CRT or BlackCrit; instead, he advocated for CREE to be a part of the critical race family. These frameworks not only serve marginalized youth; they have the potential to inform research and teaching and serve as tools that can be used to understand race, racism, and White supremacy. As Johnson (2018) mentioned in his manuscript, Dumas and Ross (2016) advocated for BlackCrit, a theory that can be used to better understand “the Black experience” and how anti-black racism is located in laws, policies, and the everyday
lives of Black people. Echoing this demand for the theory, Johnson (2018) positioned BlackCrit as necessary in education as a way to analyze the way “social structures, policies, and practices are influenced by anti-blackness” (p. 106). CRT and BlackCrit are frameworks that aid in dismantling systemic racism and understanding race and anti-Black racism in and out of traditional school contexts. Outside of literacy, scholars are adding to this call for utilizing CRT and BlackCrit within education research. Scholars have used BackCrit in a variety of fields to highlight and make sense of the experiences of Black people (Busey, 2018; Busey, 2019; Busey & Coleman-King, 2020; Busey & Walker, 2017).

My work is grounded in the pairing of BlackCrit with CRT; since the two connect historically; however, I privilege BlackCrit as the way of the future of theoretical frameworks that aim to explore how race affects Black youth specifically. To do so, I am explicitly naming Blacks as a community that CRT serves and am explicitly taking a BlackCrit approach to emphasize the need for educational and societal equity for Black communities.

**LatCrit Theory.** LatCrit theory (Arreguín-Anderson et al., 2018; Valdes, 1996) is a branch of CRT that calls for a Latina/o consciousness by focusing on the experiences of people from Latinx backgrounds (Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valdez, 1996; Valdez, 1997; Yosso, 2006). Considering Latinx youth are often criticized based on experiences specific to Latin communities, such as immigration status, culture, language, accent, and family/last name (Yosso, 2006), this framework is grounded in their experiences. LatCrit aims to examine layers of racism experienced by Latina/o’s, looking to address issues that CRT may have omitted, such as language, immigration, geography, ethnicity, culture identity, and sexual orientation (Yosso, 2006). According to Valdes (1997, pp. 7-8), and referenced by (Fernandez, 2002, p. 47), LatCrit incorporates four levels and interrelated functions that link LatCrit theory
closely to CRT, such as:

1. **The production of knowledge**: LatCrit theory is, first and foremost, an intellectual and discursive movement striving to create a culture of understanding about Latinas/os and the law. LatCrit theory, therefore, represents an interdisciplinary and critical approach to the study of social and legal conditions that beset Latina/o communities.

2. **The advancement of transformation**: The importance of practicality commits LatCrit theory to the advancement of transformation— the creation of material, social change that improves the lives of Latinas/os, and other subordinated groups.

3. **The expansion and connection of struggle**: In addition to resisting domestic/foreign dichotomies, LatCrit theory rejects single-axis or unidimensional conceptions of "Latina/o" issues, which are likely to ignore intra-Latina/o diversities. Similarly, LatCrit theory recognizes the need to attend to more than immediate self-needs, therefore constitutes itself as a struggle on behalf of diverse Latinas/os, but also toward a material transformation that fosters social justice for all.

4. **The cultivation of community and coalition**: LatCrit theory's functions include actively nurturing a community of scholars who share a similar approach to legal theory, and who share a similar commitment to collaboration. Because it seeks to expand and connect anti-subordination struggles, the LatCrit enterprise thus far has been a collective design rather than the sum of atomized or individuated exertions.

Though LatCrit derived from critical legal scholarship (Valdes, 1996; Valdes, 1997), it extends CRT literature (Arreguín-Anderson et al., 2018). LatCrit enhances CRT by including the extension of conversations about race and (anti)racism to analyze and consider Latinas/os' experiences. This framework resists dominant ideologies and subordination while centering the
experiences of the Latina/o community, guided by principles such as social justice orientations (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, Latina/Latino students’ stories must be at the center of research to better understand the issues that affect them and their communities, filled with cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). The experiences and perceptions of Latino/a students in educational settings are privileged within this framework. Thus, LatCrit theory is the most appropriate theoretical lens to examine the unique challenges faced by Latinx youth and their specific experiences within and beyond the school context.

This framework and the pairing of BlackCrit with CRT are fundamental tools in critiquing racialized barriers in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006; Valdes, 1997). Within the existing scholarship, studies highlighted the interconnectedness of CRT and LatCrit by exploring both theoretical frameworks together (Bernal, 2012; Cammarota, 2014; Cooper Stein et al., 2018; Fields et al., 2014; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Valdez, 1996). A focus on how marginalized youth, namely those from Black and Latinx backgrounds, are historically marginalized is embedded in the systemic discussions grounded in LatCrit and CRT. When LatCrit is paired with other critical race centered theories, much is to be learned about marginalized youth experiences from equity-minded scholars and minoritized youth themselves. As Fernandez (2002) explains, “CRT and LatCrit have the potential to contribute significantly to work done on and about students of color” (p. 46). This study speaks to these racialized barriers in education settings by juxtaposing the sophisticated literacies youth engage in outside of traditional school and school-like contexts.

Similarly, Martinez (2017) called for an intersectional approach; although the author did not specifically name LatCrit or BlackCrit, he discussed the importance of examining Black and Latinx youth together because of their shared experiences. Furthermore, when used together,
CRT and LatCrit provide an opportunity to reflect on the lived experiences of Black and Latinx youth and the benefits of privileged knowledge of communities of color, precisely the cultural wealth of Black and Latinx youth (Yosso, 2005). The intersection of CRT and BlackCrit and CRT and LatCrit allows for an exploration of relationships among youth of color and their shared experiences. In the future, I desire to see BlackCrit and LatCrit frameworks paired together because it is essential to collectively highlight the racially-infused experiences of minoritized youth, specifically Black and Brown students in literacy research and literacy spaces such as English/Language Arts classes, after school programs, summer camps, youth organizations, and specifically in the context of my work within digital and social media spaces. BlackCrit and LatCrit are two frameworks that ground the study to explore the literacy practices and racialized experiences of minoritized adolescents in social media contexts. These frameworks, which to date have not been adequately represented in cutting-edge literacy research and scholarly conversation on Black and Latinx youths’ lived experiences grounded in race, and their literacy practices in unsanctioned online spaces, specifically social media, is an untapped area in the literature review. Not many studies have employed or drawn from BlackCrit and LatCrit, at the same time, in literacy education (Martinez, 2017; Sampson et al., 2020), as most studies have drawn from one or the other, and to date, none in social media literacy contexts. I aimed to fill this gap in literacy scholarship with this study.

**Chapter Summary**

Although critical approaches are taken in the literacy research literature, the concept of merging critical approaches and taking on an intersectional approach is relatively rare (Bernal, 2002; Martinez, 2017; Sampson et al., 2020). This study was developed to examine how characteristics of BlackCrit and LatCrit help name and articulate how race matters in youths'
literacy practices, daily lives, and lived experiences. Thus, taking a critical approach that is youth-centered positions young people as sophisticated content creators, multimodal composers, and members of minoritized communities and cultures. Taking on a critical stance is about exploring how race and racialized experiences affects Black and Brown youth. A critical stance, developed through crit-based theoretical frameworks used in literacy research, can positively impact marginalized youth educational experiences. One way is through antiracist teaching and literacy instruction. Other ways are by considering equity and justice and what that requires of and from literacy educators and researchers. Critical stances such as CRT, BlackCrit, and LatCrit opens opportunities for youth to transform traditional ways of thinking and resist deficit-based assumptions placed on them.

A critical approach is central to this research because it helped me better understand and answer the research questions: *How do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences, and How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?* I described further details of the basis of this study in the next section, the literature review, Chapter III.
CHAPTER III: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A critical approach to education requires scholars and practitioners to consider equity, justice, and antiracism as we continue pursuing a reimagining of literacy, English language arts, and the contexts in which they occur. In doing so, students of color are afforded the opportunity to see themselves and have others see them as successful in their academic and lived experiences. A significant part of a critical approach is the lens through which we view traditional notions of education, literacy, English language arts, and youth. While each Black and Latinx young person receiving education in the United States is sure to have a different and unique experience, this literature review describes what research has said about the literacy experiences of minortized youth in educational spaces. Furthermore, a gap in the literature is revealed, indicating the need to examine youth in settings where they initiate literacies and seek to understand informal educational contexts such as social media spaces that encourage autonomy and agency, lacking a presence in work reviewed.

The content of this literature review includes an introduction to the digital literacies context that is necessary for understanding: a) a broadened notion of literacy; b) a critical discussion of literacy towards racial equity of Black and Brown young people; c) an overview of research related to the topic of youths’ literacy experiences in and beyond traditional educational spaces; d) an integration of literature on social media and literacy, specifically, teens’ social media use, including engagement in social media spaces and social media as a literacy employed by youth; e) support for the need of this research; and f) a conclusion tying together the main points drawn from the reviewed works. The literature selected for this review was obtained primarily from university library databases, including digital collections of academic journal publications. Publicly available search engines, including Google and Google Scholar, were also
consulted during this review. Specifically, I searched the ERIC and Education Index databases using the following criteria: Each study must: (a) have been peer-reviewed; (b) have featured youth such as elementary, middle, or high school students, or young adult youth; and (c) have included some aspect of student or youth literacy practices.

**Broadened Notion of Literacy**

In this section, I review the existing research that frames this study. First, I speak to the changes in literacy towards broad notions of literacy, which the study is derived from. I describe how pioneer scholars have noted how literacy has changed due to a broad notion of what literacy is and what the term, *literacy* means. I do so by synthesizing the relevant literature on digital literacy and new literacies and share how pioneer scholars defined literacy. In addition, I note how my work in examining youth's literacy practices in unsanctioned spaces is worthy, appropriate and meaningful to educational research and how it connects to current literacy research. I do so by honoring the unsanctioned literacy practices of adolescents. Next, I explore the literacy practices established through and around digital technologies to guide my research and set the stage for research to support adolescents' literacy practices through online spaces such as social media. Finally, I specify how and why the concept of literacy as multimodal and social is relevant to this research. This section links to the paper's overall argument because it speaks to youths' online literacies and adolescents’ as expert literacy users in digital spaces. This section also links to the overarching purpose of the paper because it highlights what we know and what has been done already in the field of digital literacy.

**Changes to Literacy**

Lankshear and Knobel (2011) noted how literacy has changed dramatically since the 1990's due to what they describe as the "mass availability and take-up of sophisticated and
powerful digital technologies and electronic networks" (p. 3). Thus, youth are engaging with these sophisticated technologies in a multitude of ways. Adding to how literacy has changed, Leander, Phillips, and Taylor (2010) explored the changing social spaces of learning and media change. Similarly, Alvermann (2004) noted how everyday literacy practices changed and examined the impact of media and information communication technologies (ICT) on how youth read, write, and view text, arguing that literacy is reinventing itself through new media and digital technologies. Taking a cultural studies perspective, Alvermann (2004) situated youth as literate in media and ICTs "in ways that exceed what many of their classroom teachers know or even consider worth knowing" (p. 78). Continuing this work, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) explained how new literacies are emerging and evolving "under contemporary conditions of media/technology, popular cultural affinities, approaches to learning, and ways of being in the world" (p. 33). In addition to this, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) explored everyday participatory and collaborative literacy practices such as blogs and wikis and everyday practices of online social networking. By doing so, scholars can see how young people engage in social networking, new literacies, and social learning. Broadening notions of literacy allow for understanding that youth are involved in literacy outside of schools and, more specifically to this study, within social media platforms, a powerful form of literacy where Black and Brown youth's identities are shaped.

Though responsible for much of the progress related to broad notions of literacy, Alvermann (2010) redefined literacy so that it was not conceptualized as one form of literacy and argued that "students' social practices in or out of the school world are literacy practices that can (and should) be a part of classroom literacy experiences" (p. 149). Other scholars do the same; for example, Gee (2000) argued against literacy as what he described as a "stand-alone mental
ability" and instead positions literacy as "inextricably connected to identity work" (p. 412) as he took on a new literacy perspective to explore teens' social languages. These broad notions of literacy are the foundation of my work, which argues that literacies are much more than reading and writing in traditional form. Moreover, though these scholars intentionally redefine literacy, they missed an opportunity to reimagine how youths' social practices (Alvermann, 2010) lend themselves to the intersecting relationship between their identities, which is also a part of their literacy practices. Hence, not only is literacy connected to identity work, as Gee (2000) suggests, it is also inseparable from the intersectionality of those identities. Next, I discuss the works that contribute to a new literacies perspective, which adds to my work's foundation.

**A New Literacies Perspective**

Scholars have defined literacies differently, ranging from narrow and traditional to broad and new. For example, scholars Gee and Hayes (2011a) generally defined literacy as reading and writing human language. On the other hand, new literacies scholars Lankshear and Knobel (2011), defined literacies as "socially recognized ways in which people generate, communicate, and negotiate meanings of Discourses, through the medium of encoded texts” (p.33). They categorized blogging, fanfic writing, manga producing, memeing, photoshopping, anime music video practices, podcasting, vodcasting, and video gaming as literacies, along with more traditionally generated texts such as letter writing, keeping a diary, maintaining records, reading literary novels, and note-making (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Broadening the definition and idea of new literacies, scholars Knobel and Lankshear (2014) explained the idea of new literacies as "focused on ways in which meaning-making practices are evolving under contemporary conditions that include, but are in no way limited to, technological changes associated with the rise and proliferation of digital electronics" (p. 97). Doing so, they also extended what counted as
literacy. Further, Knobel and Lankshear (2014) noted new literacies practices such as "creating fan fiction, blogging and microblogging, remixing cultural artifacts, photo curating and sharing, video gaming, video game modding, online social networking, editing wikis, creating machinima, editing anime music videos, sharing and contributing to memes, building apps, creating animations, and participating in interest-driven online forums" (p. 98).

Adding to new literacy scholarship, other works within the review focused on video game communities and gaming in online contexts (Gee, 2004; Gee & Hayes, 2011a; Gee & Hayes, 2011b; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007), fan-fiction writing sites (Black, 2009; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Thorne & Black, 2007), literacies with and through mobile phones (Hagood et al., 2008; Warner, 2017), and youths' engagement with social media or network sites (boyd, 2014; Knobel, 2006; Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Niederhauser, 2016; Nowell, 2014; Talib, 2018) and digital literacies (Aguilera, 2017; Kinney, 2012; Lindstrom & Niederhauser, 2016). Though these works do their part in examining young people's social practices within new literacies and their identities, much of the focus is situated within White and gender-related research; a noticeable absence is the study of youth of color across genders.

Other research has explored the everyday practices of youth and the social learning of adolescents (Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M., 2007; Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M., 2011; Leander, K. M., & McKim, K. K., 2003; Leander, K. M., Phillips, N. C., & Taylor, K. H., 2010) in contexts that span across online spaces. For example, Hagood et al. (2008) defined new literacies as "patterns of out of school multiliteracies" (p. 58), highlighting examples such as adolescents' use of media, including the Internet, television, movies, music, video games as all being forms of literacy, including youth writing online as new literacies. Additionally, new literacies researcher Warner (2017) studied youth who composed in what she characterized as "networked,
multimodal, potentially interactive and global new media environments using a variety of modes with their mobile phones" (p. 187), and tapped into the "socially-shared offers related to composing with mobile phones in and across networked spaces" (p. 187). Thus, cultivating opportunities to describe the social meanings of youths' literacy practices across different online contexts and spaces. This dissertation study adds to the new literacies scholarship within these works, speaking to the context of networked spaces to explore youths' literacy practices. Unlike the literature reviewed in this scholarship, it focuses explicitly on Black and Latinx youth and their autonomous and agentive literacies. From these studies, grounded in new literacy, literacy scholars have learned how broadening the definition of literacies and incorporating it to include new literacies, multiliteracies, and social spaces help recognize that youth's everyday practices are worth exploring (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Moje, 2009). More, however, needs to be learned about Black and Latinx youth's unique literacy experiences in social media spaces, specifically how teens use these online spaces to speak to their racialized experiences without influence from facilitators, instructors, or any educator-like individuals.

**Literacy: What Counts and What Does Not**

Within the literature, there is a message that the literacies youth participate in out of school, when juxtaposed with their school literacy practices, do not count the same. For example, Alvermann and Hagood (2000) asked young people who were fans of alternative popular culture texts and described their loyalty towards these texts as fandom. By doing so, Alvermann and Hagood (2000) privileged adolescents' fandom as worth cultivating, arguing for educators to "remain open to the possibility of welcoming certain aspects of adolescent fan culture into the school curriculum" (p. 437).
Adding to this work, Alvermann et al. (2012) examined adolescents' engagement in social media, a factor that they argued is very influential in changing the dominant narrative of what counts as literacy in digital spaces. Thus, these scholars noted the relevance of the online social media youth are participating in, such as fan fiction, video games, podcasts, and digital storytelling, towards their learning of core content in these youths' traditional educational experiences (Alvermann et al., 2012). Similarly, Hagood (2003) examined the role of new media and online literacies in young people's lives and argued for education to be more relevant to students' lives.

In agreement, Moje and Ellison (2016) aimed to extend literacy learning towards what middle and high school students were doing outside of school. Also, the scholars called to extend the concept of extended literacy by considering not only sociocultural theories of reading but the theory of new literacies to extend the literacy field thinking about literacy beyond what is happening in the classrooms at school by including what they deemed as ‘everyday’ literacy settings” (p. 27). Furthermore, the scholars examined the ways extended literacy can extend the concepts of reading in today’s digital tools era and encouraged the literacy scholarship on extended literacy to move from research to practice (Moje & Ellison, 2016). For example, Moje and Ellison (2016) argued that “digital texts can also be used to differentiate instruction and accommodate a broad range of student’s skills, needs, experiences, and interests” (p. 31). They also are in support of “other scholars who argued that schools can support students in reading by incorporating images, podcasts, and videos to scaffold comprehension” (p. 31). Furthermore, Moje and Ellison (2016) noted how, within today's digitally mediated world, "digital texts and tools have become the norm in many students' lives and experiences" (p. 30).
Additionally, Alvermann (2008) situated adolescent literacy as being linked to youths' social practices noting their online literacy such as blogging, gaming, instant messaging, and social networking and advocating for classroom practice transition. Thus, Alvermann (2008) examined the ways literacy research "theorized adolescents' online literacies in relation to classroom practice" (p. 9) by privileging youth's online practices and explaining how online spaces cultivated opportunities for youth to engage in literary practices that speak their worlds into existence. More specifically, Alvermann (2008) sought to explain how online spaces "afford windows into the processes young people use to reinvent themselves" (p. 13). In sum, these scholars situated youths’ out of school literacies, online literacies, and digital literacies in their daily lives as unquestionably counting as useful, complex, and worthy literacies and make the point that they are not generally honored in the classroom. Next, I discuss works highlighting the unsanctioned literacy practices of adolescents and discuss the argument of scholars who advocate for these practices to be taken seriously.

**Honoring Unsanctioned Literacy Practices of Adolescents.** Within the literature reviewed on prominent scholars who set the stage for young people's literacy work, seminal research pointed to the power of unsanctioned reading and writing practices. For example, scholar Elizabeth Moje (2000) situated graffiti as an unsanctioned writing practice of middle school-aged teen boys and found through their writing the importance of graffiti in their lives. Within her work, she inquired into youths' motivations for graffiti writing and positioned this writing practice as "one of many unsanctioned literacy practices of gang-connected adolescents" (Moje, 2000, p. 651). Instead of positioning graffiti writing traditionally, with negative connotations of, for example, as "a deviant or resistant behavior," she situated graffiti writing as central to who the teen boys were as people, arguing it was a "way of conveying, constructing,
and maintaining identity, thought, and power” (Moje, 2000, p 651). Like Moje's (2000) work, Desai (2016) explored the identity of a once gang-affiliated male, who turned to spoken word poetry, an unsanctioned literacy or as Desai (2006) described as "ill-literacies" (p. 800). Desai (2016) also advocated for spoken word poetry, specifically towards oppressed students. Doing so supported their identity work and afforded them the ability to examine their lived experiences and question their everyday lives, finding their voice along the way.

The literature showed evidence of scholars tapping into the need for unsanctioned literacy practices that are part of youths' out of school lives to be taken seriously, not only by educators but also in the literacy field at large. For example, Moje (2000) argued the need for literacy theorists, researchers, and practitioners to "acknowledge the power of unsanctioned literacy tools in the lives of marginalized youth and develop pedagogies that draw from, but also challenge and extend, these practices" (p. 651). Continuing this work, Moje (2004) examined the out of school literacy spaces of Latinx youth and the powerful spaces they occupied. Here, tracing the out of school literacy experiences of marginalized youth are privileged. In this work, Moje (2004) explored the "spaces youth have access to and the ways they use literacy to claim, reclaim, or construct new spaces and particular identities" (p. 16). These works lay the groundwork for this study, where I sought to examine the social media spaces youth have access to and the ways they used and created literacies in these spaces.

Next, I discuss the multimodalities of literacy, as I focus on youths’ wide and diverse literacy practices, and focus on how taking a multiliteracies approach can bridge youths’ out of school lives to their school literacy practices. In this discussion, I argue multimodal and social literacies count and matter, and push beyond traditional print text to not only welcome, but also cultivate all forms of literacies that Black and Brown youth sophisticatedly engage in.
**Literacies as Multimodal and Social**

While the articles in this literature review agree that literacy and youths' online literacies are multimodal and social, it is crucial to realize that not all these literacy characteristics were always a part of policy, practice, and research. In *New literacies: Everyday practices and social learning*, Lankshear and Knobel (2011) discussed how, by 1980, literacy moved to the forefront of educational policy, practice, and research. They attributed this change to several reasons such as: (a) Paulo Freire and the radical education movement; (b) the 1970s literacy crisis; (c); literacy, economic growth and social well-being (d); literacy, accountability, efficiency and quality; and (e) the growth of sociocultural theory (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 4). As literacy moved to the forefront, so did scholars who recognized similarities between literacy and new literacies. For example, Alvermann (2010) argued that reading and writing have always been multimodal and explained, "a multimodal approach allows educators and researchers to attend to all of the resources involved in composing, which are especially visible in digital composing" (p. 7). This approach cultivates advanced and complex literacy practices for youth. Here, opportunities are fostered by youths' ability to compose multimodal texts in online spaces. According to Alvermann (2010), "modality provides a framework for observing how young people use myriad digital 'tools' to engage in literacies that expand what counts as communicating effectively in different contexts" (p. 2). Extending the scholarship on literacy as multimodal and social, scholars Aguilera, Stewart, Mawasi, and Cortés (2020) noted the benefits of using a multidimensional framework towards digital-age literacies with a goal of "a renewed focus on technology-mediated social practices that shape what it means to be and become literate in contemporary society" (p. 1). The scholars explored various literacy practices established through and around digital technologies as they learned about and supported learners' literacy
and language practices occurring in the 21st century (Aguilera et al., 2020). Thus, the literacy research reviewed here notes the trajectory of literacy as multimodal and social.

The reviewed studies situated a multimodal approach to literacy to support broad notions of what literacy is and means. For example, Skerrett (2010) bridged multimodal literacies and a third space. She defined *third spaces* as places where “in- and out of school literacy practices are brought together to engage and scaffold adolescents’ academic learning” (Skerrett, 2010, p. 67) and conceptualized the *Third Space* by pointing to how it relates to a multiliteracies approach to pedagogy (Skerrett, 2010). According to Skerrett (2010), a multiliteracies approach to student learning “values and draws from the numerous meaning-making social contexts, representational modes, and tools (available designs) that students possess to help them extract, express, and (re)design meaning in their academic, public, and private lives” (p. 67). With *third spaces* in mind, Skerrett (2010) examined book clubs as a literacy practice, which occur in and out of school, and noted how a Facebook profile for the main character of the controversial book, Lolita, helped readers express the meanings they derived from it on Facebook, the third space bridged in and out of school literacies. Still, there is a need for studies within the sole context of online spaces, which can change the narrative that a pairing of school or school-like spaces with online contexts is necessary for worthy literacy experiences.

Adding to the literature advocating for bridging adolescents’ out of school lives to their school literacy practices, Skerrett (2011) examined the benefits of enacting a multiliteracies pedagogy and the use of the theory of *Third Space* to examine instruction that connects adolescents’ "in- and out of school knowledge and experiences to enhance their literacy learning” (p. 185). The scholar noted the possibility for boundaries to be erased between in and out of school literacy practices and students’ lives when teachers enact multiliteracies pedagogy and
advocate for freedom and choice for their students (Skerrett, 2011). Further, Skerrett (2011) argued for the existence of educators that "open their classroom doors wider and wider to diverse literacy practices and contexts like rap, tagging and real life" (p. 198). Thus, situating the unsanctioned literacies practices of adolescents such as rap, tagging, and those that tap into youths' real lives as worthy and counting as literacy. However, the literature revealed these works as the beginning of exploring broad notions of literacy; there is still much work to be done on the topic. Specifically, this study explored how minoritized youth enact literacy practices within and through social media platforms as autonomous agents, furthering the definition of literacy and what it means.

**Black and Brown Youth Literacy Experiences in and out of School Contexts**

In this section, I review the existing research on literacy towards racial equity that frames the study. Here, I synthesize the relevant literature speaking to the relationship between literacy, race, and the educational experiences of Black and Brown youth by centering work by scholars of color who seek to understand Black youth's literacy practices in and beyond school spaces. Also, I describe how scholars of color and critical scholars explored marginalized youths' engagement with digital literacies within traditional spaces (i.e., school classrooms, camps, clubs, summer workshops, and programs) and organized and institutional spaces. Further, I explore literature that centers Black and Brown youth in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces with the presence of a teacher, facilitator, or instructor, and I make a case for investigating minoritized youth in online spaces, where they have personal agency and autonomy, without teachers' or instructional facilitators directing them. Next, I discuss marginalized youths' identity work and the need for exploration in online spaces. This section links to the paper's overall argument because it speaks to the literature on minoritized youth
literacy practices, which mainly inquire into organized and academic spaces like classrooms, camps, summer reading programs, writing workshops, and outside school clubs. This section also links to the paper's overarching purpose because it highlights the need to inquire into minoritized teens' literacy practices in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces. By examining Black and Brown adolescents' literacy practices in social media spaces, teens' agency becomes privileged as they initiate their literacy practices, are not being directed, and enact literacies based on their autonomous moves in online contexts.

Next, I discuss scholarship that takes a critical approach to situate minoritized youth literacy practices in digital spaces. I reference scholars that argue youth take on complex, sophisticated and savvy literacy practices in out of school settings and speak back to the dominant narrative that Black and Brown youth have deficits regarding in-school or more standardized traditional literacy practices.

**Black and Brown Youth Digital Literacy Practices in out of School Spaces**

Very little literature within the scholarship on Black youths' literacy practices in out of school contexts takes a critical literacy approach to their work. However, scholars Kinloch et al. (2017) ethnographic study took a critical literacy approach to examine two 18-year-old Black males' out of school literacy practices, rooted in community engagement. The three scholars focused on how adolescents' engaged in "nonschool, community-based, social justice initiatives represent strategic attempts to resist and counter deficit narratives or ideologies about who they are (their racialized and gendered identities) and what they allegedly can or cannot do (their literacy capacities and capabilities) when in school" (Kinloch et al., 2017, p. 34). This work adds to the literature on how minoritized youth take on complex, advanced literacy practices outside of school and speaks back to deficit narratives about their in-school literacy practices. The
literature also speaks towards the need to inquire into the affordances of curriculum that speak to Black girls' digital literacies and investigate how Black girls display critical literacy practices in digital spaces. Engaging in this work, scholar Price-Dennis (2016) adds to the literature that positions youths' digital literacy practices as sophisticated and complex. However, this scholar addressed issues specific to Black girls and women, often highlighted on social media platforms, such as identity, achievement, safety, self-expression, and social justice (e.g., #SayHerName; #BlackGirlMagic; #BlackLivesMatter) (Price-Dennis, 2016). By doing so, the researcher noted that findings from her study showed that Black girls' digital literacies are complex, deeply layered, and nuanced. The scholar also found that online literacy practices were often situated in social justice discourse, fostering a sense of activism in these digital spaces (Haddix et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016). Doing so aids Black girls' autonomy and personal agency as they produce, control, and disseminate the dominant ideas that exist towards what counts as literacy, validating Black girls in a way that asserts their beliefs. Adding to activism taking place in online spaces, Haddix et al. (2015) work spoke to the activism of one youth writer who called for social action and change. More importantly, these scholars advocated for youth to have support systems, drawing on how adults can encourage youth who take on social action and change efforts. However, a noticeable gap exists in identifying the ways youth of color enact intersecting identities through their digital literacy practices. Much of the literacy scholarship that exists on intersectionality approach it with a theoretical stance; however, studies (Haddix et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016) have the potential to highlight what intersectionality looks like in practice and could provide a window into how online spaces amplify the voices of youth of color, ensuring activism does not go unnoticed.
Extending the literature on Black girls' literacy practices in digital spaces, Greene (2016) noted how youth utilized the online social networking tool, Facebook, to engage an online street literature book club. Black girls interacted in online discussions with other Black adolescent girls. The sophisticated literacy and self-work of these girls allowed Greene (2016) to gain insight into their "positionalities as Black girls and as readers of culturally relevant texts" (p. 280). Black girls' digital literacy practices were situated as advanced and complex throughout the scholarship on minortized youth online literacy practices. For example, throughout her study, Greene (2016) found that her participants' self-representations were shaped by multiple factors such as the use of multiple modalities, the collective Black girl experience shared during the book club, society's neglect of Black girls, their perspectives around personal traumatic experiences they had, and the traditional social norms around literacy and language. The scholar privileged Black adolescent girls and how they represented themselves in the online street literature book club.

Very few studies in the literature represent Latinx students’ literacy practices in out of school spaces; scholar Elizabeth Moje (2000, 2004) contributed to this scholarship. For example, Moje (2004) investigated the out of school literacies of seven bilingual Latinx youth in various urban spaces to reveal the different ways that the youth see “the spaces” of their everyday lives. To do so, Moje examined the multiple environments and contexts Latinx youth had access to and the ways they used literacy in out of school contexts, specifically analyzing how they used literacy to claim, reclaim, or construct new spaces and identities. Here, youth of color, specifically Brown youth, accessed various spaces, which Moje (2004) named as national, discursive, local, and virtual, where this study comes in. Works like this are important because they examine youth practices in their everyday lives for constructing hybrid identities while
allowing youth to maintain their culture and community (Moje, 2004). Similarly, this study sought to address literacies and representations of youth of color experiences and perspectives on their everyday spaces; however, I did so solely by looking into social media platforms.

Furthermore, Moje (2000) called upon literacy scholars who insist, "literacy is a tool for transforming thought and experience" to extend that claim to all literacy practices by examining the benefits and affordances of unsanctioned literacy practices for youth of color. To encourage this work, Moje (2000) sought to explore how marginalized youth, including a Latinx participant, used unsanctioned literacy practices as tools to express themselves, such as poetry, tagging, graffiti writing, and incorporating words, accents, and plays on language in their letters and notes. Working with a group of ethnically diverse gang-connected youth, including a Latinx youth, Moje (2000) sought to understand how they used literacy and literacy practices to position themselves as important, command a presence in spaces by having a voice and being a part of a story, construct an identity, and take on social positions in their lives. Similarly, this study sought to situate the power of unsanctioned literacies, specifically social media literacies, in marginalized youth's lives and adds to the literature on studies that inform practitioners by offering pedagogies that draw from, challenge, and extend unsanctioned literacy practices.

Next, I discuss the scholarship on the need to connect minoritized youths’ outside of school literacies to their school literacy practices.

**Connecting Minoritized Youth Unique Literacies to School Literacy Practices**

Extending the conversation within the literature, scholars defended the need to connect minoritized youths' outside literacies to school literacy practices. For example, Skerrett and Bomer (2011) used a multiliteracies framework to examine the benefits of drawing on, as they described, urban students' outside-school literacies to inform teaching and learning in language
arts classrooms. The scholars argued the importance of teachers affirming the out of school literacies of what they described as urban students and noted the importance of teachers to connect those literacies to the standard curriculum to enhance the in-school literacy engagement and success of the youth (Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). This work adds to the literature encouraging educators to bring minoritized students' everyday literacy practices into school and extends it by noting the connection between those outside practices and the traditional curriculum the teacher is mandated to teach.

Taking a different approach to connecting minoritized youth, Black students, specifically language and literacy practices to their experiences in English/Language arts classrooms, is the work of April Baker-Bell. Scholar Baker-Bell (2020b) called on scholars and English Language Arts educators to employ an antiracist Black Language Pedagogy, challenging them to “produce antiracist scholarship, praxis, and knowledge that work toward transformation and social change in service of addressing racial, cultural, and linguistic inequities in language and literacy education” (p. 1). Within the literature reviewed, April Baker-Bell’s work (Baker-Bell, 2020a; Baker-Bell, 2020b; Baker-Bell, Paris, et al., 2017) on the importance of Black Language having high regard, value, and a place within literacy are evident. Baker-Bell centered her work on Black Language and Black lives by examining the ways educators can adopt an antiracist Black language pedagogy in their English language arts classrooms and dismantle anti-black linguistic racism in their curriculum and pedagogies (Baker-Bell, 2020a; Baker-Bell, 2020b; Baker-Bell, Paris, et al., 2017). For example, taking an ethnographic approach in her study on the experiences and perceptions of Black Language on 9th-grade Black students in an English Language Arts class, Baker-Bell (2020a) examined the linguistic inequities faced by these youth, described anti-black linguistic racism, and questioned the notion of academic language.
Advocating for Black youth language to be valued and honored, the scholar suggested educators implement an Anti-Racist Black Language Pedagogy to aid dismantling “anti-black linguistic racism and white cultural and linguistic hegemony in their classrooms” (Baker-Bell, 2020a, p. 8). Regarding enacting an anti-racist Black language pedagogy, Baker-Bell (2020a) made a substantial claim about the need for educators to look within, and around, to take note of what they are perpetuating as what counts in their classrooms with language and literacy, arguing that “before ELA teachers can implement an Anti-Racist Black Language Pedagogy in their classroom, they have to interrogate their own views of Black Language and the ways in which they perpetuate anti-black linguistic racism in their classroom” (p. 18). Doing so holds educators accountable for the work ahead.

Additionally, scholars within the literature connect minoritized unique literacies to potential English/Language Arts education practices in different ways. Kirkland (2009), examined how a young Black adolescent's tattoos were an untapped literacy type. In his study, Kirkland (2009) explored how a young male made sense of his life through his tattoos, tapping into this youth's identity, and sought to examine how these tattoos provided suggestions for scholars and educators to rethink Black males, literacy, and English education. Doing so, this scholar advocated for a change in the way English educators and scholars think about literacy and to question what counts as literacy and English teaching, urging English educators to see reading and writing in new ways that draw from multiple meanings (Kirkland, 2009). The need for studies to uncover new ways and challenge traditional ways researchers and practitioners think about literacy and consider youths’ practices in their personal lives as literacies are evident in studies like this. Further, this work and work like it speaks to how young people, particularly
minoritized youth, use a wide range of literacies that do not fit nicely into traditional curriculum and pedagogy.

Next, I highlight how bringing Black and Brown youths’ online practices in classroom spaces is one way to connect minoritized youths’ outside of school literacies to their school literacy practices. I also discuss the classroom implications for youths’ online literacies, specifically speaking to how digital literacies offer practitioners many instructional opportunities. I specifically draw from scholars of colors that advocate for the need for teachers to offer minoritized adolescents experiences that allow them to practice their autonomy and agency.

**Bringing Black and Brown Youths’ Online Practices into Classroom Spaces.** The literature overwhelmingly showcased classroom implications for digital literacies even though it lacked a representation of Black and Brown youth engagement with digital literacies and social media where teachers were not directing them and operating off of only their autonomy and agency. For example, in her article, Price-Dennis (2016) argued the need for teachers to offer Black girls opportunities to engage with their online literacies. She recommended they foster ways for youth to produce multimodal texts for authentic audiences, explore digital tools in a variety of ways that foster collaboration and discussion, draw on Black girls’ lived experiences to build on the curriculum, and use digital tools to examine social issues going on in the world. She also called on educators to implement time in the school day for youth to engage in digital literacies, such as sharing hashtags, memes, gifs, or vines that speak to their identity or counter and challenge any misconceptions about their lives (Price-Dennis, 2016).

The same is true for most literature reviewed, which looked to help teachers implement and navigate youths’ use of 21st-century digital technologies in the classroom and the
curriculum. For example, Greene (2016) situated literacy as a digital practice and urged literacy educators to incorporate different digital technology platforms into their pedagogical practices, such as "zines, digital storytelling, glogs, podcasts, digital memoirs, and digital storyboards into instruction" (p. 285). Like other scholars who did this kind of work, Greene (2016) provided implications for classroom use and pedagogical strategies. Adding to the literature on bringing online practices into classrooms, Greene (2016) provided examples of digital platforms that encourage teachers to “allow Black girls to engage in critical literacy and create- and co-create digital imagery” (p. 285). She adds that “in these opportunities to be creators lie opportunities for Black girls to engage in agency, identity, and meaning-making” (Greene, 2016, p. 285). These works are in support of the online practices of youth being worthy of classroom spaces.

The literature reviewed did not have an abundance of studies represented from the Latinx perspective. Having such a small number of studies representing this work shows that scholars need to include Latinx youth. Lindstrom and Niederhauser's (2016) study took a new literacies perspective to recognize youth literacy practices in a classroom-based social network site and how they reflected digital literacies. The youth were ethnically diverse; however, Latinx youth were included along with Black and Asian youth. This study positively highlighted social network sites as places where youth of color use and create literacies not privileged elsewhere, helping classroom teachers integrate social media sites and digital literacies into their instructional practices. Thus, social media has expanded what a literacy practice is and looks like in today’s society (Lindstrom & Niederhauser, 2016) and classrooms as a potential pedagogy (Talib, 2018).

In sum, I found that when marginalized youth were addressed in the literature, the majority of the studies focused on Black youth specifically, leaving even more gaps from the
Latinx perspective. I also noted there are not many studies investigating Latinx youth and digital literacies, Latinx youth in social media literacies, and Latinx youth use of unsanctioned literacy practices because researchers typically study White youth in these contexts. Thus, few studies highlight the benefit of bringing Latinx youth online literacy practices into classroom spaces or connecting Brown youths' literacies in their lives to their in-school practices (Lindstrom & Niederhauser, 2016; Moje, 2000; Moje, 2004). The study sought to add to the scholarship on how Latinx youth use informal out of school literacy practices on social network sites.

**Social Media and Literacy**

In the next section of the literature review, I shift to the scholarship on social media and literacy to discuss young people's reading and writing engagement in online spaces. To provide a lens on social media's place in literacy, I discuss the rise in teens' social media use, explore their literacy practices in these spaces, and examine how youth social media literacies have been employed.

**Rise in Teens’ Social Media Use**

There is an increase in social media among youth (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Greenhow et al., 2016; Kovalik & Curwood, 2019). Scholars Anderson and Jiang (2018) noted the fall of teens' use of Facebook and the rise in popularity of online platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat. Facebook, now widely known as Meta, is no longer the dominant space for teens (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), leading this study to explore Black and Brown teens’ racialized experiences and perspectives on more teen-populated online platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, referenced by these scholars. Adding to the exploration of social media and youth, this study contributes to the scholarship by including other social media platforms such as Twitter and TikTok that youth occupy online.
Youth Engagement in Social Media Spaces

Besides the rise in teens’ social media use, there is a discussion in the literature about youth access to online spaces. For example, Greenhow et al. (2016) suggest that despite having less home and school access to computers and the internet, Black and Latinx youth spent more time online than White youth. Even though youth of color are occupying online spaces more than their White peers, they are not adequately represented in the literature. Consequently, there is a gap in the research surrounding how Black and Brown youth engage in online spaces, the affordances and limitations of these spaces for Black and Brown youth, and how Black and Brown youth as inhabitants of online spaces explore their racialized experiences and identities as they move within and beyond the spaces, as well as the artifacts they leave behind. Hence, there is a necessity to explore the practices of minoritized youth who are occupying these spaces.

Since scholars (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Gerber et al., 2017; Kovalik & Curwood, 2019) in the literature suggest that young people are connected to the world through online platforms, there is a call for exploring how teens are composing in multimodal ways and sharing with online communities. For example, Kovalik and Curwood (2019) examined the impact of Instagram on literacy by exploring the ways young people engaged in online literacy practices, specifically how they composed multimodal digital poetry using the social media platform Instagram. Adding to the literacy research on social media and teens', Kovalik and Curwood (2019) explored how modes of literacy and writing practices have changed due to new technologies and how young people create digital poetry through Instagram. In doing so, scholars investigated Instapoetry's popularity amongst young people. Along with Kovalik and Curwood (2019), other scholars' works in online spaces (Black, 2005, 2009; Patterson, 2017, 2018) set the tone for exploring young people's online literacies. To move the scholarship
forward, I contribute to the literature on literacy and social media by examining Black and Brown youth's voices on social media platforms in response to racialized experiences and the literacy practices they utilize to do so.

Though the scholarship leaves space open for exploring youth of color and social media, Greenhow et al. (2011) tap into the inclusion and focus on young people rarely highlighted in learning technologies or traditional discourse conversations, specifically high school students from low-income families to explore their use of social network sites. The study adds to this scholarship and further closes the gap by examining populations rarely featured in research, specifically Black and Latinx youth, how they use social media, how they talk about their experiences and perspectives, and how they respond to injustice, inequities, racism, and national events. Thus, establishing the importance of hearing from Black and Brown teens regarding their social media use and the literacies they employ.

**Social Media as a Literacy Employed by Youth**

Greenhow (2010) suggested that the ways young people contribute in social media spaces "may facilitate new ways of thinking about current events and civic life and about themselves as social commentators, citizens, and agents of change" (p. 62). However, more research is needed on how teens of color use social media to contribute to the conversations surrounding (anti)racism, social justice, and equity. In addition, there is a need to explore how youth of color serve as agents of change and activists in online spaces. Since the literature revealed that youth are critically participating in social media networks, as Greenhow (2010) referred to, there is a discussion about the content producer role that many young people take on in online spaces. There is a gap in the ways Black and Brown teens contribute to producing content online that may be related to activism. Also, this study contributes to the literature on how youth use social
media to respond to current events, civic life, and youth as social commentators, citizens, and agents of change, which Greenhow (2010) suggested.

Further, the literature reviewed situates some social media platforms, such as Twitter, as spaces where literacy practices are enacted by young people. For example, in their article, Greenhow and Gleason (2012) conceptualized tweeting as a literacy practice that included traditional and new literacies and discussed the ways tweeting impacts learning settings that are informal and formal. Scholars Greenhow and Gleason (2012) also discussed how youth used tweeting as a way to create "new cultural constructs for themselves that foster complex text-making, skilled reading, sophisticated forms of feedback, and other skills that connect with the formal literacy curriculum" (p. 474). Thus, establishing the need for research that examines how youth of color tweets attend to how they understand their racialized experiences and perspectives.

Adding to the scholarship of social media as a literacy, Galvin and Greenhow (2020) suggested that teens are writing more on social media than with their formal learning spaces, such as classrooms. They also propose that teens' writing online differs from their in-school writing and categorize it as separate and complex literacies, distinct from the traditional writing teens encounter in the school curriculum (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020). Though the scholarship points to assets of social media, such as its ability to afford youth access to writing opportunities that are engaging and authentic (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020), there is a noticeable absence of how these online platforms provide specific assets to teens of color who use social media to write authentically.

Aside from writing, the literature speaks to other literacies employed by youth in social media spaces. For example, Greenhow, Cho, et al. (2019) suggest that social media tools can aid
in literacy learning in traditional school contexts by explaining how Twitter helps develop student argumentation skills. In agreement with Greenhow, Cho, et al. (2019), Galvin and Greenhow (2020) highlight social media's importance within literacy instruction. In their findings, Galvin and Greenhow (2020) discussed three ways social media was applied in high school classroom writing instruction. The scholars determined that social media were used as an online composition space for formal classroom projects, as a supplemental tool within a larger writing project, and to connect to authentic contexts or replicate real-world experiences (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020). Thus, the literature on social media highlights the broad range of possibilities for social media and education (Gerber et al., 2017; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Greenhow et al., 2016, Greenhow et al., 2019; Greenhow, Cho, et al., 2019) as scholarship overwhelmingly speaks to how social media affords new possibilities for enhancing student learning and the role social media plays in education. Thus, by adding to the existing scholarship, the study sought to investigate how youth of color employ literacies on social media and the broad ways in which they compose in response to their lived experiences.

**Gaps in Research: The Need for This Work**

The literature reviewed highlighted research on youth's literacy practices guided by a teacher, facilitator, instructor, or other adult influence in digital and online spaces. Here, I argue for the need to examine youth literacy practices in online spaces, where they have agency and 100% autonomy to respond to a gap within the research.

*From Being Directed to Doing the Directing: Removal of Facilitators Towards Autonomy and Personal Agency*

The literature revealed how scholars of color and critical scholars explored marginalized youths' engagement with digital literacies within traditional spaces (i.e., school classrooms,
camps, clubs, summer workshops, and programs) and organized and institutional spaces. When scholars study Black and Brown youth in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces - it is with the presence of a teacher, facilitator, or instructor of some sort, which leads to a gap in the scholarship, which helps make a case for investigating minoritized youth in online spaces, where they have personal agency and autonomy, without teachers' or instructional facilitators directing them.

Though the literature reviewed inquired into adolescents' literacy and composing practices in online communities, few studies focused on minoritized youth populations. When scholars did, the marginalized youth represented did not cover Black and Brown youth, which remained neglected in the conversation. Scholar Black (2005, 2009) focused on English language learners, specifically Asian youths' literacies and identities in an online fanfiction community. Within this work, Black (2005) argued, "networked computer environments offer great possibilities for developing adolescent English-language learners' interactive writing abilities" (p. 118). The scholar privileged ELLs' (English Language Learners) literacy practices in these online fanfiction communities and noted how fan authors are cultivated in these spaces to adopt a hybrid identity (Black, 2005). More specifically, she noted, "fan authors often construct hybridized identities that are enacted through their texts. It is not uncommon for authors to insert themselves into their fictions as characters that possess a mixture of idealized and authentic personality traits" (Black, 2005, p. 123). Though ELL youth are represented to some extent in the literature, it is outside of the Latinx population; therefore, a gap exists within the literature towards Black and Brown youth's online literacy practices in unsanctioned spaces.

Many scholars within the literature explored marginalized youths' engagement with digital literacies within traditional spaces, such as school classrooms (Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-
Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), camps (Price-Dennis et al., 2017), and summer reading programs (Aguilera & Lopez, 2020), writing workshops (Kinney, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), and outside school clubs (Greene, 2016) where young people engaged with technologies in more organized and institutional spaces. For example, Price-Dennis et al. (2015) explored diverse students', including Black and Latinx youth, digital literacy practices in an inclusive classroom. Scholars focused explicitly on a population of students who received specialized services, noting how, in previous education experiences of the authors, they "often had limited access to working through the layered process of creating digital projects that could demonstrate their capacity to make sense of content across modalities" (Price-Dennis et al., 2015, p. 1). Adding to the assets of digital literacies, Price-Dennis, Holmes, and Smith (2015) argued that digital tools were one of the three elements of support that they found cultivated students' literacy practices and skills to become more complex and deliberate, along with engaging in a community of learners and being immersed in real-world content. They noted that situating digital tool use has the potential to "illuminate the possibility for 21st-century literacies to inform classroom discourse and digital learning experiences" (Price-Dennis et al., 2015, p. 9). Specifically, the scholars discussed a wide array of technological platforms, such as Flipboard, Corkulous, GarageBand, ComicLife comic strip generator, Weebly, PowerPoint/Prezi, and Stop-Motion Animation. Within the study, youth used these digital tools to enact literacy practices. The authors argued the need for practitioners to think about how digital tools can enhance critical thinking skills and how the allowance of student agency offers opportunities for students of all backgrounds to thrive (Price-Dennis, et al., 2015).

The literature on Black and Brown youth literacies in school or school-like contexts almost always pointed to some level of directing or influence from an outside source such as a
teacher, facilitator, or adult serving in a mentor or coach position. For example, Detra Price-Dennis's work, often situated in classroom spaces, is centered on digital literacy pedagogies that attempt to create and sustain learning environments that are equitable for students of color, specifically youth from marginalized communities (Price-Dennis, et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016). In one study, Price-Dennis (2016) used a Black girls' literacies framework to examine how the curricular choices that happen in schools contribute to Black girls' literacies in digital spaces. Here, Price-Dennis (2016) explored digital literacy practices in the curriculum to understand how teachers cultivate opportunities where Black girls can develop critical literacy practices in the digital spaces they occupy. In addition, Price-Dennis (2016) argued that digital tools have many assets and noted them specifically with Black girls in mind, such as highlighting the technological capabilities of youth, promoting youth exploration of past and current social issues, promoting youth agency, fostering youth confidence with digital literacies, and showcasing how learning happens for Black girls across the different modalities they navigate; highlighting their multiple literacies. I argue online spaces, social media, in particular, are neglected in the literacy scholarship on Black and Brown youth when they are the directors of their literacies.

Adding to the literature on minoritized youth digital literacies in the classroom or classroom-like environments are scholars like Delicia Greene, Earl Aguilera, and Geraldine Lopez. The literature on Black and Brown youth in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces highlighted some adult or person holding a position of authority or power was present. Specifically, when it was not a teacher guiding youth, it was a facilitator, coach, researcher, or adult figure that youth was under the direction. For example, Greene’s (2016) study centered on Black adolescent girls’ literacy and language practices in school and school-like (i.e., classroom,
a local public library) and online spaces, where she explored how Black adolescent girls represented themselves in an out of school online street literature book club on the social network site Facebook. The research sought to examine how Black adolescent girls represented self, made sense of social representations, and disrupted societal Black girlhood representations (Greene, 2016). The youth did so by engaging in book club discussions of what Greene (2016) referred to as street literature texts, drawing specifically on adolescents’ self-representations inspired by the 1996 novel *PUSH* by Sapphire, which highlights the experiences of an illiterate 16-year-old Black girl who endures several hardships which society, her parents, and the school system are to blame partially. Those online conversations were initiated by discussion questions and prompts provided by a facilitator.

Another example within the literature on minoritized youth digital literacies in the classroom or classroom-like environments are scholars Earl Aguilera and Geraldine Lopez (2020), whose study situated critical digital storytelling "as a means of reframing academic marginalization and celebrating students' stories of resilience" (p. 583). Aguilera and Lopez (2020) defined digital storytelling as "the creation of short-form digital media by everyday people to share aspects of their lives through story" (p. 583). In their study, Aguilera and Lopez (2020) reflected on a developmental reading course they co-taught as part of a summer program to engage in work to center high school students' lived experiences as they transitioned to first-generation college student status. Aguilera and Lopez (2020) examined how digital storytelling served as a powerful literacy practice of young people, explicitly supporting students labeled as educationally and economically disadvantaged. This article falls within the scholarship on marginalized youth engagement with digital literacies where youth are guided, in this case, by instructional facilitators. As the literature revealed, when teachers were absent, a facilitator was
still directing youth through prompts, discussion questions, or some variation of constructed activities. Few studies within the literature investigated minoritized youth engagement with digital literacies and social media without teachers’ or instructional facilitators directing youth.

Next, I highlight how works within the literature examined marginalized youth's identity work and the gaps that still exist in this space. I also discuss the impact of scholarship that speaks to marginalized youth experiences and their impact on their identities to explain how this study intended to fill the gap.

**Identity Work in Online Spaces**

While the works referenced agree that identity work is a vital component to discussing youth's literacy practices from marginalized populations, it is crucial to realize that not all literature centers on Black girls' identities and literacies. Though most scholars, like Greene (2016) and Price-Dennis (2016), along with other predominantly Black female scholars, called for attention towards marginalized teens' identity work in online spaces, specifically Black girls, there is a need to explore the identity work of all minoritized youth. This study sought participants who identified as Black or Latino/a and did not consider participants' gender, seeking youth that identified in any gender identity category.

Even less literature explores Black and Brown youth's identity development engaging in literacy practices in online spaces (Greene, 2016; Price-Dennis, 2016). There was much more literature attending to the identities of minoritized youth in school or school-like settings. For example, outside of the online realm, Muhammad's (2014) work examined the literacy benefits and identity work of Black girls' who participated in a summer writing collaborative, which acted as a hybrid space for the powerful ways in which youth composed their writings. By doing so, Muhammad (2014) argued spaces like the summer writing collaborative cultivate the writings of
Black girls, and when these spaces and the work in them are honored, "Black girls will not only write, but they will use their pens to make their mark on a rich literary history for other generations to follow" (p. 325). Thus, there is a gap in the literature regarding marginalized youths' identity development in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces. Despite the lack of scholarship in identity development in digital and social media (Greene, 2016; Price-Dennis, 2016), the scholarship offered a discussion on fostering the identity work of minoritized youth in and beyond traditional school contexts. Further, there is a gap within literacy scholarship regarding the place for intersectionality within the existing literature on the identity work of Black and Brown youth in online spaces. Though scholars investigated areas of study within the identities of Black girls, there were no direct links to the intersecting identities of race and gender (Greene, 2016; Price-Dennis, 2016).

Still, much of the literature explores Black and Brown youth's identity development in traditional school or school-like contexts. For example, in their 2017 article, Black female scholars Detra Price-Dennis, Gholnecsr E. Muhammad, Erica Womack, Sherell A. McArthur, and Marcelle Haddix all spoke to their respective literacy programs, which were created to center Black girls' identities and literacies. The scholars noted Black adolescent females' literacy experiences by exploring community and school-based programs that successfully centered the literacy needs and interests of Black adolescent girls (Price-Dennis et al., 2017). They also recounted their own experiences, drawing from their individual and collective experiences to explore Black adolescent girls' unique identity development in and beyond traditional school contexts (Price-Dennis et al., 2017). All of the programs were aimed to help "young girls explore their identity while cultivating their different literacies in K-12 literacy programs/initiatives that highlighted, sustained, and expanded their literacy practices" (Price-Dennis et al., 2017, p. 6).
Like Price-Dennis (2016), the collective group of authors employed a Black girls' literacies framework "to advance traditional school-sanctioned practices that typically define literacy as reading and writing skills" (Price-Dennis et al., 2017, p. 14). Using the framework, Black girls' literacies, Price-Dennis et al., 2017 explored the particular acts of Black girls, for example, how they affirm who they are and their world through reading, writing, and speaking, all of which that speaks to the multifaceted lives of young Black girls. By doing so, the authors advocate for Black girls to (re)claim spaces that cultivate opportunities for them to define themselves and engage in identity development. Thus, there was a noticeable theoretical gap in the literature towards critical frameworks such as Critical Race Theory, BlackCrit, which were not used in works taking on this topic, leaving space for my work, grounded in a critical approach.

Furthermore, in agreement with Price-Dennis (2016), the authors argued that K-12 teachers need to fully understand Black girls' identities by examining their literacies and the practices needed to teach them best. To do so, they noted that in order to challenge, "the deficit perspectives of young Black women, educators must consider Black female lives and literacies from a strength perspective" (Price-Dennis et al. p. 15). In agreement with Price-Dennis (2016), they encouraged educators to create authentic spaces for Black girls where they can express themselves by using their voices, expressing their perspectives, and engaging in various literacies, profoundly saying, "our young sisters deserve our focus and investment" (Price-Dennis et al., p. 15). These Black scholars' work illustrates the need for teachers to value Black girls' intellect and agency, work with Black girls to apply critical literacy practices, engage in activism and foster spaces for identity development and work (Price-Dennis et al.). Their work adds to the literature that seeks to support Black girls "as they learn how to reimagine and construct narratives about their evolving identities, while simultaneously disrupting
perceptions/discourses that do not acknowledge or honor their potential or current contributions to our society” (Price-Dennis et al. p. 13). However, there is a need for literature to explore minoritized youth identities and literacies more broadly and in online spaces.

Nonetheless, some of the literature specifically attempted to explore race within online contexts. In Alvermann's (2010) Adolescents’ Online Literacies: Connecting Classrooms, Digital Media, and Popular Culture, scholar David Kirkland privileges the narratives of Black women who use digital spaces such as blogs to immerse themselves in online social communities. In these spaces, young Black girls tell stories of struggle and triumph through narratives written in many forms, for example, poetry as they engage in digital construction of meanings, make sense of themselves and their worlds through images and words, all while forging identities through digital (re)writings of their narratives (Alvermann, 2010). The young Black woman highlighted how they used the Internet to empower them and other Black women, a counter that speaks to women’s already existing stories online. Kirkland tells these stories to make a case for a new century literacy classroom, "where online narratives of Black females can be shaped, shared, and studied in order to promote healing, social awareness, and a righteous understanding of Black femininity" (Alvermann, 2010, p. 86). Here, the discussion of race in digital spaces is told as one of empowerment, drawing on the assets that digital media affords Black women in their storytelling efforts; still, there is a need for this work to extend across gender and race.

Working to address the gap of the need to explore minoritized youth identities and literacies more broadly and in online spaces is Ashley Patterson (2017, 2018), who stood out in the literature reviewed on young people and their uses of digital media due to her focus on the educational experiences and identities of biracial individuals in social media spaces, where they shared "their personal truths with real and imagined audiences" (p. 105). Furthermore, Patterson
(2017, 2018) stands out in the literature on minoritized youth due to her data purely focused on the YouTube clips posted by biracial youth, and is the only scholar who studied without interview data since she did not talk to the individuals directly. Patterson (2017, 2018) used critical discourse analysis of YouTube videos created and shared by Black-White biracial individuals who gave narratives of their experiences in educational spaces. Also, Patterson (2017) examined how these individuals, ranging from late teens to mid-late 20s, discussed their beliefs about their identities, precisely “the ways they see themselves and the ways they want to be seen” (p. 105). Since Patterson (2017, 2018) focused on the way biracial YouTubers explored themselves through social media by analyzing clips posted, she understood how biracial individuals used YouTube as a platform for personal identity expression. There is still work to be done to address the gap; this study adds to the scholarly literature to explore how the literacies Black and Latinx youth enact through social media are related to their racialized experiences and shape their identities.

Next, I highlight the ways in which this study addressed the gaps above.

**Addressing Gaps Within the Literature**

Specifically, I discovered that my research question and its sub-question is an important one to ask, especially given the calls for scholars to include students out of school literacies, digital literacies or online literacies via social media platforms into education research of Black and Brown individuals (Patterson, 2017, 2018; Skerrett, 2010, 2011; Skerrett & Bomber, 2011). In reviewing the previously published research, I found that little to no studies have explored this question. Further, in asking what we do not already know about Black and Brown literacy practices and their experiences grounded in race, I found that exploring this question in the context of online settings helps to provide a rationale for my research question (*In what ways do
minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx youth, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences?) and its sub-question (How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?). In reviewing the previously published research, I found that few studies have explored this question in online contexts such as social media platforms.

Next, I call for the need for literacy scholarship to examine the literacy practices of minoritized youth in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces, such as social media platforms. I also speak to the existing way the scholarship covers this work, which is through looking at traditional school and school-like spaces where a facilitator of some sort guides youth. I counter the need for another person's presence and call for research where minoritized youth are driven by personal agency and autonomy instead of direction and facilitation.

**A Call for Examining the Literacy Practices of Black and Brown Youth in Unsanctioned, Unorganized, and Unfiltered Spaces.** Much of the literature on minoritized youth literacy practices took the same approach, with scholars inquiring into academic spaces like classrooms (Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), camps (Price-Dennis et al., 2017) and summer reading programs (Aguilera & Lopez, 2020), writing workshops (Kinney, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), and outside school clubs (Greene, 2016) to investigate young people's experiences with digital literacies in organized spaces and attempt to understand the literacy practices enacted by youth in traditionally academic contexts.

In sum, the literature reviewed extensively explored Black and Brown youths' engagement with digital literacies in organized, institutional spaces that can be characterized as a traditional learning context. The majority of studies and research occurred in these organized
spaces, where some authority figure was directing youth, for example, teachers, facilitators, instructional volunteers, etc. Although less organized and traditional than classrooms, camps and workshops are often run as school-like, proving somewhat institutional as youth mostly compose in traditional ways. Due to the lack of literature on young people, specifically Black and Brown teens' sophisticated literacy practices, there is a need to examine the unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces, particularly digital media and social media, that teens of color occupy. The literature gap exists in this untapped space, where Black and Brown teens have 100 percent autonomy, where they initiate literacy practices, where they are not being directed, and where their personal agency is present throughout their entire experience in online social spaces.

Scholar Patterson (2017, 2018) partially attended to this gap, exploring how YouTube, an unsanctioned space, afforded biracial individuals opportunities to discuss their experiences in and out of educational contexts and their identities. She suggested researchers who do this work “realize the gravity of the responsibility of working with participants in online spaces” (Patterson, 2018, p. 765). Furthermore, she noted the importance of keeping data associated with the people who tell their stories. Honoring individuals in online spaces and advocating for researchers to learn from and listen to them, Patterson (2018) said, “YouTubers and the videos they choose to share in that venue have the propensity to tell us innumerable things about the ways they see the world, the ways they see themselves, and the ways they want to be seen” (p. 765). It is worth noting that Patterson did not directly contact her participants and focused solely on the content uploaded to the online platform and not so much on the individuals' offline lives. Therefore, her work was not deemed necessary to pass through the IRB process. However, in my case, I addressed gaps in the literature by writing the narratives with youth by interacting with participants and honoring their voices, experiences, and literacies within social media contexts. I
also take an interest in their lived experiences, both in their on and offline lives, and how they enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences. Taking a different approach than Patterson (2017, 2018), who grounded the way for this study, I engaged in this work in such a way that built off talking with youth, having interactions, and observations of youth in social media spaces.

Conclusions

The field of literature focusing on Black and Latinxs individuals in online spaces is expanding. Given the timely appropriateness of studying Black and Brown youth in the US's racial climate and the importance of digital spaces across the country, this study is needed. Not only does this population of youth deserve to be a part of studies where broad notions of literacy are adopted, but their voices should also be a part of the racial conversations happening across the country. As shown in this literature review, a growing number of works consider Black and Latinx individuals' experiences as students within K-12 and post-secondary school settings. While the works falling into this category provide useful information about the schooling and lived experiences of Black and Latinx youth, their identity development, and help to provide culturally responsive, sustaining, and revitalizing pedagogies, they do not directly contribute to the body of work seeking to understand how Black and Latinx individuals initiate literacies in unsanctioned, unorganized, and unfiltered spaces. Thus, in many of these cases, the school and school-like setting hinder studies' ability to see minoritized youths’ autonomy and agency. These traditional educational contexts also mask the fact that youth are involved in literacy outside of schools and school-like settings. Therefore, it is crucial to expand what counts as educational contexts. This work does just that by taking the stance that social media is a powerful form of literacy. That literacy is tweeting, posting, hashtagging, and sharing stories in multimodal
formats in online spaces. Though the scholarship already positions young people as expert literacy users and examines youth online literacies in great detail, the lack of attention to Black and Brown individuals when they are not sitting in an organized space with a facilitator of some sort is an untapped space worth exploring.

Since this extensive literature review has revealed an existing gap in literacy scholarship focusing on the literacy practices and experiences of Black and Latinx individuals in nontraditional educational contexts, I draw from the work in Critical Race Theory, BlackCrit, LatCrit to examine the experiences and unique needs of racial minorities in social media contexts. These theoretical orientations laid the foundation for these concerns to be taken up in the educational field. For example, Johnsons' (2018) work with Critical Race English Education takes a critical stance toward English/Language Arts education and drive the need for reforms in classrooms that would allow for equitable educational experiences for all students, specifically Black students, and demand socially just and anti-racist teaching from practitioners. I argue that the development from academic work that focuses on naming and acknowledging the individual experiences of minoritized people to academic work that focuses on discovering ways to practice, utilize, and employ newfound understanding to individual students is currently taking place in education research involving Black and Brown students.

There is evidence in the literature that the right moves are being made in this direction. A number of the studies I reviewed are starting to make more direct connections between minoritized youths' racialized experiences and literacies and the nontraditional educational contexts in which they are developed and observed. However, several of these examples fell short in considering the multifaceted literacies and lived experiences at work when studying and drawing conclusions about Black and Latinx youth and what they share and do in online spaces.
Without the considerations mentioned above, the students' whole range of expert literacies is not being considered; if this kind of investigation is not taken, it is difficult to recognize how complex and sophisticated Black and Brown youth lives and literacies are. Further, if this sort of analysis is not being taken, it is not easy to see how such efforts can encourage practitioners to engage their Black and Brown students holistically. As presented here in this review, other studies are starting to consider Black and Latinx youth in alternative settings that analyze their literacy practices under a broadened notion of literacy and what counts as literacy. These studies also are starting to embrace the idea of minoritized young people as active participants engaged in their racialized experiences, literacy engagement, and identity development, and this dissertation proposal is an addition to this developing body of work. Here, I position minoritized youth as skilled and expert literacy composers and users even more so because they are not being directed, facilitated or fed information, prompts, and material, often a reoccurring practice in organized spaces such as schools and school-like settings. Within these unsanctioned spaces is where we see the literacies and lived experiences of Black and Brown youth, specifically in this study through social media platforms, the chosen outlets of numerous young people driven by their autonomy and agency.

Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed here sets the stage for the work to follow. Having provided an orientation to racialization in the United States, I have contextualized the importance of a study focusing on the experiences of Black and Latinx individuals in this country. A review of existing works considering Black, Latinx, and minoritized individuals revealed that many of the studies took place in school or school-like settings. Scholarship within these educational contexts, such as classrooms, summer camps, workshops, and afterschool programs, does not directly address
Black and Brown youth’s literacies when they are not being directed and not sitting in an organized space. Further, those works that take into account and engage more with nontraditional contexts (i.e., online literacies, digital spaces) often fail to consider the minoritized individual as an active role and component of the work they did. Thus, pointing to the significance of a study to consider online spaces, often regarded as unsanctioned due to the nature, to examine Black and Latinx individuals’ literacies with 100 percent autonomy, personal agency, and where teens themselves initiate their literacy practices. This study, in the context of social media spaces, strived to do just that.

Consequently, this literature review led me to examine the ways minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx youth, engage in literacy practices within the context of social media and how these literacy practices relate to their racialized experiences. While there is a need for studies that explore in rich detail exactly how youth compose and engage in digital literacies in online spaces, there is also a need for studies, like this one, that explore how Black and Brown youth use personal agency and full autonomy through social media to engage in literacies that are not even named and acknowledged yet. I align this dissertation proposal with the scholarly literature reviewed that guides the field of studies featuring Black and Latinx individuals toward an approach that centers on their unique literacy practices and racialized experiences. The following chapter presents the methodological steps I took to select participants, collect data, and analyze data while keeping this goal of considering the distinct and individualistic characteristics of Black and Brown bodies at the forefront.
CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

Everything I do online is a reflection of the person I am, and I always want that image to be true to myself. Anyone who has been in a classroom or organization with me knows that I am outspoken and I always need to offer perspectives that I think are crucial to a discussion relating to social justice and I do the same online. Everything I post is a show of my values. – Laura

The quote that begins this chapter is from member checking with Laura during an informal conversation shortly after her third interview. It emphasizes how the identity she created online intersects with her advocacy efforts, and social justice, antiracism, and equality work she does outside of social media. This chapter provides the necessary information about the approaches I took to address the study's research questions, specifically, *In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences and how do those literacy practices shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?* Since, in chapter III, I previously established a gap within the educational literacy scholarship that specifically failed to address Black and Latinx adolescents' agentive and autonomous literacy practices with online spaces, such as social media, this chapter presents a detailed picture of the study design. With that in mind, the purpose of this research is twofold: (a) to understand how minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens' engaged in literacy experiences within the context of social media spaces and how those literacy practices intersected with their racialized experiences; and (b) to understand how those social media literacy practices shaped their identities, in the scope of readers, writers, multimodal composers, and as young people of color in today's society.

This chapter describes and justifies my methods in this qualitative collective case study, otherwise known as a multi-case study. First, I discussed why a case study was selected as the methodology of choice in this study. Next, I described the participants within various social
media platforms. Then, I highlighted the study's context and provided an overview of the various online social media space(s) in which the youth occupied. Following that, I presented an overview of the data collection and analysis procedures used in the study. Last, I noted ethical considerations, provided details surrounding the measures taken to ensure this research's trustworthiness, and considered various strengths and limitations of this work.

**Methodologies Within Research on Youths' Online Literacies, New Literacies, and Social and Digital Spaces**

This section examined common methodologies within the literature reviewed on young peoples' online literacy practices within the scope of new literacies in social and digital online spaces to argue the need for a collective or multi-case study methodological approach taken by this study. Specifically, I noted how traditional ethnographies, connective ethnography, and teacher research/practitioner research are specific methodologies within the literature reviewed employed to understand youth's literacy practices across online spaces. Then, I explained how a collective (Stake, 1995) or multiple case study methodology would add to this literacy research area. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to highlight existing methodologies utilized to understand the literacies practices in digital spaces that youth participate in and is used to argue for a multiple case study methodology. This study adds to the scholarship on minoritized young peoples' experiences in online spaces such as social media by introducing a collective case study methodology to understand the similar and unique literacy practices teens of color enacted in these contexts.

Methodologies used in literacy scholarship on youth across online spaces varied to some extent. Some studies used ethnographies to study adolescents' digital literacy practices (Black, 2009; Kinloch et al., 2017), and even fewer scholars called upon connective ethnography
(Leander & McKim, 2003; Warner, 2017). Both Warner's (2017) study of mobile literacy practices and Leander and McKim's (2003) article on shifting the design of ethnographic methodologies for studying adolescents' online literacy practices explored Internet-related ethnographies as a methodology choice. For example, the methodology used in Warner's (2017) study of three adolescents engaging in composing with mobile phones was connective ethnography. Since Warners' (2017) research was grounded in connective ethnography, she was able to study "how technology functioned as a part of the participants' everyday social lives" (p. 3). Researchers who use connective ethnography (Leander & McKim, 2003; Warner, 2017) sought to describe and interpret youths' practices in online and offline spaces, in contexts such as youths' homes, schools, and web communities. For example, Warner conducted interviews online through electronic messages and in person at their high school; this way, she was able to consider "all of the participants' literacy practices in the scope of their sociocultural context" (p. 45).

In addition, methodologies used in literacy scholarship on youth across online spaces varied. For example, some studies used ethnographies to study adolescents' digital literacy practices (Black, 2009; Kinloch et al., 2017), and a limited number of scholars called upon connective ethnography (Leander & McKim, 2003; Warner, 2017). Both Warner's (2017) study of mobile literacy practices and Leander and McKim's (2003) article on shifting the design of ethnographic methodologies for studying adolescents' online literacy practices explored Internet-related ethnographies as a methodology choice. Since Warners' (2017) research was grounded in connective ethnography, she was able to study "how technology functioned as a part of the participants' everyday social lives" (p. 3). Researchers who use connective ethnography (Leander & McKim, 2003; Warner, 2017) sought to describe and interpret youths' practices in online and
offline spaces, in contexts such as youths' homes, schools, and Web communities. For example, Warner conducted interviews online through electronic messages and in-person at participants' high school; this way, she was able to consider "all of the participants' literacy practices in the scope of their sociocultural context" (p. 45).

Furthermore, within the scholarship reviewed, one study took an approach of teacher research or practitioner research. For example, Nowell, 2014 examined teachers and students' concerns over media and digital literacies in the classroom, the digital divide, and digital teacher-student relationships. Nowell's (2014) study took a systematic approach to investigate the ways high school teachers and students used technologies that are often labeled as disruptive in schools, such as teens' mobile phones and social media. Though this work was conducted through a teacher research project, it lent itself to a multi-case study approach. However, this study intentionally takes a multi-case approach across contexts such as multiple social media platforms to explore the literacy practices of marginalized teens in the scope of their racialized lived experiences and race-related perspectives.

Thus, there is a gap within the literature where there is a need to take a more in-depth look into how Black and Brown teens engaged in literacy practices online when acting on their autonomy, agency, and action-oriented moves, using a collective case study (Stake, 1995) or multi-case approach. Also, a multi-case study approach filled the gap in methodologies for online studies by allowing me to understand Black and Latinx youth's racialized experiences, including the ability to look at patterns, trends, and conundrums and uncertainties across cases. Additionally, this methodology afforded opportunities to move past the already established idea of adolescents as expert literacy users and youth online literacies by supporting inquiry into how
minoritized teens are empowered and inspired by unsanctioned online spaces as they engage in agentive literacy practices connected to their lived experiences and identity work.

**Research in Online Spaces: Social Media and Literacy**

The scholarship on social media and literacy suggested implementing qualitative approaches to research such as case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology to examine learning in formal and informal online spaces (Gerber et al., 2017). Also, the literature advised the use of multimethod approaches for engaging in research in online contexts. For example, Gerber et al. (2017) proposed a remix-inspired multimethod approach to examine meaning making in online and offline spaces, and noted contemporary remix examples such as fanfiction and memes. In addition, the literature discussed research in online spaces through many modern learning theories such as participatory cultures, connected learning, and affinity spaces to describe and theorize learning (Gerber et al., 2017). As the research reviewed conceptualized learning in online spaces (Gerber et al., 2017), it did not consider Critical Race Theory (CRT) and other critical theories to frame methods. Hence, leaving a gap for this case study research, grounded within the lens of critical frameworks such as Critical Race Theory, BlackCrit, and LatCrit, an area neglected in the conversation of theories to recognize Black and Brown youth's unique and collective experiences in social media spaces. Since the literature on online contexts includes conceptualizing social media as field sites where learning through digital tools occurs, there is a need to consider how online qualitative research is digitally mediated and encompasses online spaces of learning, which include social media spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Gerber et al., 2017). Despite the knowledge in the field, there are gaps in the social media and literacy scholarship that revealed the need to examine how teens of color used online spaces such as social media to engage in identity work, grappling with
understanding who they are as individuals, as members of marginalized populations, and as composers of literacies. Therefore, methodologically speaking, there was a need within the scholarship to inquire into how digital culture, such as social media, shapes Black and Brown youth literacy practices, and I take this on using a collective case study approach to this qualitative research study.

**Research Design**

This research used a collective case study (Stake, 1995) as the methodology because it afforded me the best opportunity to answer my research questions. For example, a multi-case study methodology allowed me to focus on and privilege the literacy practices and racialized experiences of Black and Latinx youth. Since case study research examines an issue by exploring one or more cases within a bounded system such as a setting or context over time and extensive data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), including various information sources, it served my work well. The bounded system in my research is the context of online spaces, specifically social media sites. For instance, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described multiple and comparative case studies, which involves collecting and analyzing data from several cases, resulting in a cross-case analysis. Also, in a multiple case study, there are two components to data analysis, which Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.234) characterized as within-case analysis (each case treated individually) and cross-case analysis (building general explanations across individual cases). I adopted a multiple case study approach, also known as a multi-case study, to my study data collection and analysis by exploring several Black and Latinx teens within and across the boundary of an online context, specifically social media settings. I used this approach because I was interested in the individual experiences and the general shared racialized experiences and
literacy practices of minoritized young people in unsanctioned online settings. This research investigated the following questions through a multi-case study design:

- In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences?
  - How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?

**Case Study**

In Creswell’s work on case studies, he referenced qualities such as in-depth analysis, collection of detailed information, use of various kinds of data collection, and extending data collection over time. The field of literacy lends itself to using a case study method because of the vast availability of theoretical lenses and perspectives within the scholarship. In agreement, Dyson and Genishi (2005) argued that a case study method is used in literacy research to afford researchers a tool to investigate the ways people represent and interact about experiences. However, they extend the conversation beyond meaning making to include other areas, such as context, which they characterized as "the frameworks for interpretation - that people bring to those experiences" (p. 5). In closing, "a researcher selects a case study design because of the nature of the research problem and the questions being asked" (Merriam, 1998, p. 41), which is what I did in this study.

Various scholars (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002) uniquely define *case* and *case study*, each with their individualized approaches for designing a case study, gathering, analyzing, and validating data. I draw from Merriam's (1998) definition of *case* and *case study* as it most closely aligns with what type of case study and analysis I am taking on. Merriam defined a case as "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p.27). The variety allows a
case to be a person, a group, a program, or a specific policy. Also, Merriam (1998) described a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii) and characterizes this method of research as being particularistic (focusing on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon); descriptive (yielding a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study); heuristic (illuminating the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study). Before this study, I conducted a literature review (see chapter III), which Merriam (1998) considered an essential phase of designing a case study, specifically pointing to the literature review's importance to the theoretical framework, research design, creation of the research question, and study inquiry. Additionally, Merriam (1998) explained a detailed process for organizing a case method study that included conducting a literature review, establishing a theoretical framework, identifying a research problem, designing and refining research questions, and choosing the sample, which she identified as purposive sampling. Her approach combined Yin's (2002) and Stakes' (1995) organizational design.

According to Dyson and Genishi (2005), the purpose of a case study in literacy research is to describe, understand, and interpret in a way that allows the researcher to know how people make sense of the world through their lived experiences. As Dyson and Genishi (2005) expressed, "everyday teaching and learning are complex social happenings, and understanding them as such is the grand purpose of qualitative case studies" (p. 9). Thus, a case study allows researchers to examine real-life situations. On the other hand, constraints to case studies such as perpetuating quick fixes are present with the methodological design. In particular, Dyson and Genishi (2005) discussed how case studies in literacy seem not to comply but instead complicate people's desires for solving educational issues with quick fixes. For example, many educational
institutions such as K-12 schools want professional development that results in quick fixes to racial disparities in Black and Brown youth, often based on deficiencies and not educational assets. Still, this research utilized Merriam's (1998) multiple case study approach, which provided an avenue for gaining a deeper understanding of a specific phenomenon, in this case, how teens of color engaged in practices on social media spaces as expert literacy users. Merriam (1998) described comparative case studies, also known as multi-case studies, as involving collecting and analyzing data from several cases and explained how this method allows researchers to enhance the external validity or generalizability of findings. Within this multi-case dissertation study, the cases or bounded systems in my research are the teens in the study, specifically the six youth. The context of this study is the online social media spaces in which Black and Latinx youth occupy, more specifically Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube.

Overall, there are five reasons why using a multi-case study as a methodology helped me answer my study's research questions. First, a case study calls for research questions that ask how and why. In this study, I wanted to understand how Black and Latinx youth enacted literacy practices related to their racialized experiences in social media spaces. Second, I wanted to understand how those literacy practices within the context of social media shaped the identities of Black and Latinx youth. Third, having multiple cases in this study highlighted each teens' individual experiences in unsanctioned online spaces and provided opportunities for thick, rich descriptions of the experiences and perceptions of minoritized young people in nontraditional educational contexts. Fourth, using case study methods helped me uncover the meanings that minoritized teens constructed about their experiences grounded in being Black or Latinx young people in today's society, linking their racialized identity to their literacy practices. Fifth, a multi-
case study design allows me to analyze data within each case individually and a collective approach through taking an across-case analysis approach to analysis.

**Researcher Positionality and Bias**

As a Black female teacher and future teacher educator, with ten years of classroom experience (i.e., four at the elementary and six at the secondary level, specifically middle grades), most recently teaching English language arts in predominantly White, but formerly teaching at a school with a 98 percent minoritized population, I naturally became interested in the literacy experiences of marginalized youth. Along with my work experiences, my lived experiences were diverse. I was part of the "working poor" socio-economic class and transitioned into middle-class status. Growing up in the north and relocating to the south, I did not see many positive representations of Black women, which impacted my understanding of who I was. During my undergraduate experience, I began to make sense of my identities. I aim to cultivate this process for minoritized adolescents much earlier in their educational journey.

I self-identify as a person of color; specifically, I am a Black woman, more particularly a cisgender female doctoral student at a predominantly White institution that is diverse in student population. I recognize that I am a member of multiple minoritized populations (i.e., Black, female) and privileged (i.e., cisgender, heterosexual, and middle-class) ones. My dissertation work is grounded in marginalized teens of color literacy practices on social media literacies to advocate for social justice. Lastly, I am a rising literacy scholar and researcher of color committed to equity and socially just work within literacy education and research. As a member of marginalized communities, I am particularly interested in conducting qualitative research to enhance and advance the educational experiences and opportunities of Black and Latinx students. My previous experiences influenced the methodological and epistemological
foundations guiding this study as a working-class or "working poor" student in an urban
environment, a middle-class student in a suburban environment, a teacher from a marginalized
background, and a future scholar of color. I intently decided to focus on Black and Latinx teens
because research about marginalized students mainly focused on youth deficit perspectives
(Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009), and I sought to situate
minoritized youth using an asset-based approach. I recognize and understand that my
positionality plays a role in potential researcher bias, especially when cultural and racialized
aspects are part of the research.

During my time as a classroom teacher, I was able to identify the sophisticated literacy
practices students used in online platforms in my classroom and how the minoritized students I
taught found autonomy and agency through their successful experiences in online contexts. I was
also able to understand how these platforms aided in helping marginalized youth realize who
they were. I also uncovered the stories of teens grounded in their lived and racialized
experiences. However, I recognized that the racialized experiences my students and I had, rooted
in our lived experiences, may not be the same for the teens in this study. I also realized young
people were engaging in online spaces without teachers and guidelines from adults. However, I
remained open to the possibility that teens in this study may not openly reflect on their racialized
experiences or that it might look different from what I imagined. Alike, I remain open to the
possibility that participants may not engage in the multimodal and digital literacies I have in
mind. My experience as a teacher who encouraged and supported young people to compose in
multimodal ways and engage in nontraditional literacies and as someone familiar with social
media platforms as a user and content creator, I am aware of the possible impact on my analysis
of the data I collect. This insider perspective brings affordances to this online study but might
have also shaped the research, for example, by skewing my observations of the youth in this study. However, I respected the teens’ various perspectives, and experiences grounded in race and valued how they enact literacies. I talked with each teen about the study and answered any questions to address these concerns. In addition, I emphasized that I wanted to learn about how they used social media to express themselves, reflect on their experiences, and engage in traditional and not-so-traditional literacies. I took these measures to address any biases I brought to the research.

To sum, the scholarship (Gerber et al., 2017) addressed how a researcher's positioning is critical, even more so while conducting online research, such as social media. For example, Gerber et al. (2017) argued that "inhabiting an online space can be critical to the examination of participants' social behavior and meaning-making experiences" (p. 75). Moreover, the scholars speak to the ways Rebecca Black's (2008) ethnographic research of adolescents' literacies online involved engaging on Fanfiction.net as the scholar posted online and interacting with others, which Gerber et al. (2017) suggest "informed her understanding of the culture and practices of the Fanfiction site. Black was not observing from afar; instead, she situated herself within the space and among its inhabitants" (p. 75). In this study, I situated myself within the spaces youth occupied by using my own social media profiles to inhabit the same online spaces as the study's participants; thus, I inhabited an online space to gain more meaning by interacting with Black and Brown teens.

**Researcher as the primary instrument.** The role I took in this dissertation study is that of the sole researcher, and as the researcher of a qualitative multi-case study, I am the primary instrument in the study. I acknowledge that, as the researcher, I can have biases or subjectivities that influence understanding minoritized adolescents' literacy practices in social media spaces.
However, identifying and reflecting on them before, during, and after the study minimized this constraint. Also, engaging in member checking, debriefing, and triangulation also minimized those constraints. For example, researchers of color, like myself, should include a researcher bias statement (see above) that calls to recognize and understand that positionality plays a role in potential researcher bias when cultural and racialized matters are present. As the primary instrument and a future scholar of color, it was essential for me to include a positionality statement (see above) when using case study methods to study youth from marginalized backgrounds. Overall, this constraint had to do with researchers' need to be intentional about their own potential biases rather than hide behind them, as scholars Merriam & Tisdell (2016) call for.

Participants

The participant population involves Black and Latinx female and male youth between the ages of 14 and 18 throughout various states in the United States, including the Southeast and Midwest. Therefore, participants' race and age are the only limiting factors of the population considered, and there are no other identity markers (e.g., geographic location, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status) that exclude membership to the population under study. Specifically, the participant sample included four teens who self-identified as Black, one who identified as Latina and Hispanic, and one who self-identified as Latine for this research.

This study sought to understand the social media literacy practices of a small sample of purposefully selected Black and Brown youth and what impact these literacies had on their identity. To do so, I examined the intersections of literacy and racialized experiences of six teens, specifically the multimodal and digital literacies enacted by five females, three who identify as Black, one self-identified as Latina and Hispanic, and one who self-identified as Latine, and one
teen male, who identified as Black. I gained permission to complete this study based on IRB standards and requirements, and all six participants volunteered to be a part of this study. Through purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), the study participants included six teens who participated in at least one social media space such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube and had various levels of participation and engagement in social media contexts. I use pseudonyms when referencing participants, and each participant chose their unique pseudonym to protect their anonymity. Also, pertinent information about the participants in this study is located in Table 1. Additional information about the participants is located in the following chapter. More specifically, in the next chapter, I provide an in-depth description of each participant, where I present a background, literacy history and give a context of each case before presenting the findings of their unique case study in the form of individual narratives.

Table 1. Teen Demographic Information and Social Media Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teen</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current grade level</th>
<th>Physical location</th>
<th>Social media use</th>
<th>Years on social media platform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakarai</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Southeastern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, YouTube</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatum</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Southeastern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, TikTok, Twitter</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samirah X</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Midwestern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, TikTok, YouTube</td>
<td>Instagram, 1 year, TikTok, 1 month YouTube, 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnavan</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Southeastern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, YouTube</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Platforms</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camila</td>
<td>Latina, Hispanic, Dominican</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Southeastern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, TikTok, Twitter</td>
<td>Instagram, 4 years TikTok, 1 ½ years Twitter, 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Latine Mexican and Ecuadorian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>College Freshman</td>
<td>Midwestern U.S.</td>
<td>Instagram, TikTok, Twitter</td>
<td>Instagram, 2 years Twitter, 3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants for this study were asked to participate in the research because they were Black or Latinx young people who actively participated in at least one social media space through creating, uploading, and sharing content or composing in some aspect of literacy practices where they were not being directed in the online space. In other words, participants were asked to participate if they were engaging in social media spaces due to personal agency, led by their autonomy, and not guided by teachers, facilitators, instructors, or coaches, of any sort. Overall, the participants I sought were young, minoritized teens who initiated their literacy practices in unsanctioned online spaces, contrary to the in-school or school-like traditional literacy education experiences in US schools, where youth have little to no autonomy besides artificial choices in English or Language Arts classrooms. For example, ideal candidates were teens who were not well-known or famous online personalities on social media platforms, but instead, I attempted to obtain voluntary participation from everyday minoritized teens on social media platforms. To recruit youth, I used the very social media platforms youth occupied. In other words, I created and used various social media accounts on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube to find them. Thus, I used online platforms to recruit participants through these spaces. To do so, I searched through teens' profiles on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube channels. Additionally, I used hashtags to search on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok and
observed suggested accounts through algorithms on YouTube and Instagram. I was also able to search for potential participants’ by using public social media users’ lists of accounts they were following on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, and I used this tool to find possible people to recruit, using somewhat of a snowball method, in an online, social-mediated context.

Context

This study’s context was several online spaces, which included various social media platforms. The study occurred April 2021-July 2021 on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, primarily through free apps associated with each platform, although YouTube access extended to the desktop version as well. Facebook, which has now rebranded itself as Meta, is not part of the study’s context. Although it was initially the leading social networking platform for young people, it has become more desired and populated by older individuals and less desired by youth, who moved towards newer social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), two of which are part of this study. In addition, I did not include Snapchat due to practical decisions as a researcher, which would affect data collection due to the site’s operations, such as the automatic removal of content. An overview of the unsanctioned online spaces teens engaged in is below.

Instagram. This platform is an online photo-sharing app that advertises itself as a “simple, fun, & creative way to capture, edit, & share photos, videos & messages with friends and family” (Meta, n.d., Features section) as users are encouraged to use the platform to “connect with more people, build influence, and create compelling content” (Meta, n.d., Features section). The site is accessible as a mobile phone app or desktop site. Features of Instagram consist of (Meta, n.d.):
Feed Posts. Here, youth post photos or videos on their profile, which stays unless deleted by the profile user.

Reels. Here, youth can create short, fun, and entertaining videos to share with their friends or anyone on Instagram.

Stories. Here, youth can share their everyday experiences or moments, adding features such as text, music, stickers, and GIFS. These Stories can be saved and shared for more than 24 hours if youth post them as Highlights to their Instagram profile.

Messenger. Here, youth can send private messages through Direct Messenger to friends and family - or anyone across Instagram or Facebook. These messages can include photos, videos, or posts. I did not seek participants’ private or direct messages as a data collection tool for this study. However, occasionally, I communicated with teens using private messages.

IGTV. Here, youth can create long-form videos that can be commented on, liked, or shared.

Twitter. This platform advertises itself as a platform that displays "what is happening in the world and what people are talking about right now" (Dorsey, n.d, About the company section). Thus, Twitter argued that when something happens, it simultaneously happens on Twitter. Further, this social media platform allows people to see what is happening worldwide and foster a global conversation. Additionally, Twitter stated that they "advocate for free expression and protecting the health of the public conversation around the world" (Dorsey, n.d., About the company section). Individuals use Twitter for a wide range of things, such as to keep up with celebrities and sports teams, follow breaking news, or for people to express themselves. Twitter consists of the following features where individuals find their way around the social media platform (Dorsey, n.d., Using Twitter section):
**Timeline.** The users' home timeline is the heart of their Twitter account. Here, users see all the tweets from accounts their following, people talking about their interests, and what is popular, promoted, or shared in their network. The timeline allows adolescents to not just look at tweets but also interact with them in several ways, such as (Dorsey, n.d., Using Twitter section):

- **Like** to show some love
- **Reply** when you have something to say
- **Retweet** it to say it again
- **Quote Tweet** it to say it again and add your opinion
- **Share** it off Twitter

**Explore.** Here, individuals get to see trends in their area, providing them the best stories in Trending, News, Sports, Entertainment, and other categories.

**Direct Message.** Here, youth can express themselves on Twitter by having conversations with people they choose, without the world seeing it. Individuals can connect with someone or a group with a Direct Message. I will not use teens’ private conversations with others, such as their direct messages, as a data collection tool. As stated above, I did not seek participants’ private or direct messages as a data collection tool for this study. However, occasionally, I communicated with teens using private messages.

**Tweet.** Here, individuals add their voice to Twitter. They compose a tweet right from their home timeline to show the world who they are. The following is a twitter guide to the unique lingo of the social media platform (Meta, n.d., Getting started guide section):

- **Tweet:** Tweets are the messages posted to twitter that make up the whole Twitter experience. They can contain text, photos, videos, or links created to be interacted with and shared.
- **Retweets:** If a profile user sees a tweet in their timeline that they love and want to show everyone who follows them, they can retweet by tapping the Retweet button.
- **Hashtags:** Tweets can include hashtags, a keyword or phrase (without spaces) with the "#" symbol before it. Hashtags connect conversations and help you find
content. They bring people together around a topic, inspire the world, and create community. Tap a hashtag to see other tweets using the same one.

- **The iconic @**: A users' username (more commonly known as a handle) begins with a "@" symbol. It is unique to the user and appears on the profile page. The display name, referred to as "name," is a personal identifier on Twitter and is separate from the username. It can be something playful, a business name, or a real name. It is displayed next to a users' username and can be changed anytime. Users use @ to find and tag people. On Twitter, users use @ to call out usernames in tweets, send messages, or link them to a profile. Users add the "@" symbol followed by a username in a Tweet, and whomever they tag will get a notification.

**TikTok.** TikTok advertises itself as "the leading destination for short-form mobile video" (ByteDance, n.d., Our mission section). Their mission is "to inspire creativity and bring joy" (ByteDance, n.d., Our mission section). Here, youth can create and edit their videos, explore videos, like, share and comment on videos, message friends, and people they know through private direct messages, and grow their audience. In addition to following other creators, liking videos, and viewing comments, profile users can engage in the following features of TikTok (ByteDance, n.d.):

- **Videos.** Individuals can make TikTok videos and join a community of other creators and users that TikTok describes as "creative, collaborative, and trendsetting creators" (ByteDance, n.d., Creating your first video section).
  - **For You:** This is a personalized feed of videos based on user interests and engagement.
  - **Videos:** Users can share trending sounds, creators, or videos with friends, family, and larger community. TikTok allows users to share within TikTok or through other social media platforms. Users can also download and save videos if users have not turned off permission to download their videos.
  - **Discover.** Users can use this feature to search and explore the wide variety of content in the TikTok community. In this feed, users will find trending videos, hashtags, creators, and sponsored content.
○ **Search:** Users can search for specific videos, sounds, hashtags, or creators.

*TikTok Live.* This TikTok feature allows users and creators to interact in real-time.

*YouTube.* This social media platform's mission is “to give everyone a voice and show them the world” (Google, n.d., Our mission section). They go on to state that they believe that “everyone deserves to have a voice and that the world is a better place when we listen, share, and build community through our stories” (Google, n.d., Our mission section). Additionally, YouTube expressed their values based on what they described as “four essential freedoms that define who we are” (Google, n.d.). Those freedoms (Google, n.d., Our mission section) included:

- **Freedom of Expression**, which refers to their belief that people should be able to speak freely, share opinions, foster open dialogue, and that creative freedom leads to new voices, formats, and possibilities;
- **Freedom of Information**, which refers to the belief that everyone should have easy, open access to information and that video is a powerful force for education, building understanding, and documenting world events, big and small;
- **Freedom of Opportunity**, which refers to the belief that everyone should have easy, open access to information and that video is a powerful force for education, building understanding, and documenting world events, big and small; and
- **Freedom to Belong**, which refers to the belief that everyone should have a chance to be discovered, build a business and succeed on their terms, and that people—not gatekeepers—decide what is popular.

To enact these freedoms, this social media platform hosts millions of people whose community spans from users, creators, and artists (Google, n.d.). Features of YouTube consist of (Google, n.d., Product features section):

*YouTube Search.* The search tool can help users find the content they will enjoy by sorting through loads of videos to find the most relevant and useful results from the search query and presenting them in a way that helps users find the content they are seeking.

*Recommended Videos.* YouTube recommends content they think users will want to watch by sharing recommendations on YouTube's homepage and in the *Up next* section to
suggest what to watch next when a user watches a video. YouTube takes into account many signals, including the users' watch hand search history (if enabled) and users' subscribed channels.

**News and Information.** YouTube provides context for users' search results and videos by providing authoritative news and information. For content where accuracy and authoritative nature are essential, including news, politics, medical, and scientific information, YouTube uses machine learning systems that prioritize information from authoritative sources and provide context to help users make informed decisions.

**Monetization for Creators.** Users of YouTube who create their content on YouTube are referred to in this study as creators. YouTube creators are individuals who produce content for the platform. Creators have the opportunity to earn money directly on the video platform in a variety of different ways, including through placed advertising, merchandise sales, and subscriptions.

**YouTube Live.** This feature allows users the ability to reach their community in real-time with YouTube Live, which brings viewers together in real-time to learn, discuss, and to form new social communities. Some live events include people from around the world who come to YouTube to experience the world's most significant cultural moments.

In sum, the multiple contexts for this study are the social media sites highlighted above, specifically Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube. In other words, the research site spans various online platforms. Thus, teens' social media activity will vary on their profiles. I observed content on these social media platforms from each case daily, diligently checking each individual's profile or profiles each day from April to July.
Data Sources and Data Collection

This section describes my data collection techniques and resources, including interviews, observations, field notes, and artifacts. I elaborated on the procedures below in detailed descriptions. First, I highlighted Merriam (1998) and Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) data collection suggestions for the multi-case study method I adopted for this study. Then, I provided a general overview of data collection using a crosswalk (O'Sullivan, 1991) to show the link between the research questions, data sources, data analysis, and the theoretical framework (See Table 2) and a timeline to illustrate when and how data was collected throughout the study. Next, I provided a detailed description of the data collection techniques and sources I used in the study.

Merriam (1998) believes that qualitative case studies need to follow specific procedures as researchers conduct effective interviews, attentive observations, and uncover data from artifacts. In Merriam's view, case study researchers utilize three data collection methods: interviews, observations, and analyzing documents, or in this study, artifacts. The study's primary data collection sources included virtual, audio, and videotaped semi-structured interviews, virtual observations of uploaded content such as video clips, other digital and multimodal content, and artifacts digitally composed, uploaded, or reposted by teens on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube that include multimodal media. It is worth noting that though four out of the six teens had TikTok profiles, only one teen, Samirah X, posted content to her public account, the other three teens assumed roles as observers, using TikTok to watch and view the content of those they followed. Therefore, the only data collected from TikTok was from Samirah X’s multimodal content. Other secondary data sources for this study included researcher memos and field notes on observations of online content on the aforementioned social media platforms. Furthermore, scholars Merriam and Tisdell (2016) advocated for data
organization (i.e. interview transcripts, field notes, records, and reflective memos) so that all research data is easily retrievable, therefore allowing the researcher to be able to make meaning through analysis of all the information about the case bought together. I took on all of these suggested measures in this study, organizing data collected by type and teen.

**Data Crosswalk and Timeline.** To provide general information about the relationship between the research questions in this study and the data collection procedures, I provided a table (see Table 2) that describes how my research questions were investigated, including how teens enact literacies in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences and the impact on their identities. Specifically, this table describes how data collection and analysis helped answer my research questions. In addition, a rationale for each section is included to justify the research.

| Table 2. Research Questions, Data Sources, Data Analysis, and Rationale |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Research Question # 1** | In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx youth, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences? |
| **Data Sources** | Semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, adolescents content posted on social media such as video, images, captions, hashtags, and other digital and multimodal compositions |
| **Data Analysis** | Case study analysis  
Cross-case analysis  
Comparison of common patterns (Corbin & Strauss, 2007),  
Triangulation of sources over time (Miles & Huberman, 1994),  
Member checks |
| **Rationale** | Literature suggests that minoritized adolescents’ engage in sophisticated literacy practices in online spaces (Black, 2009).  
Literature suggests that minoritized adolescents’ unique racialized experiences shape their literacies in online spaces (Patterson, 2017, 2018). |
| **Sub Research Question** | How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth? |
| **Data Sources** | Semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, adolescents content posted on social media such as video, images, captions, |
hashtags, and other digital and multimodal compositions

Data Analysis
Case study analysis
Cross-case analysis
Comparison of common patterns (Corbin & Strauss, 2007),
Triangulation of sources over time (Miles & Huberman, 1994),
Member checks

Rationale
Literature suggests that minoritized adolescents’ unique racialized experiences shape their literacies in online spaces (Patterson, 2017, 2018).
Literature suggests that minoritized adolescents’ engage in sophisticated literacy practices in online spaces (Black, 2009).

Consequently, data collection consisted of three virtual semi-structured interviews, daily virtual observations, and digital and multimodal artifacts such as teens' content, including photos, text, captions, hashtags, and other compositions across social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube to better understand how six Black and Brown teens enacted literacy practices on social media related to their racialized experiences and the impact those practices had on their identities as literate beings and young people of color. In the next section, I include more details about these data sources. Additionally, Table 3 highlights the data collection procedures in the study.

Table 3. Data Collection Procedures Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>First formal interview with the six teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily observations of online content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes during viewing of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screen-recording of video content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screenshots of posts and other uploaded content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Second formal interview with six teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily observations of online content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes during viewing of content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned above, I engaged in data collection for this study over three months, explicitly collecting data on various online platforms through various sources, such as three formal semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts such as user content, including digital and multimodal posts, uploads, and shares, and informal conversations through social media correspondence, from April 5th to the week of July 5th. These data sources supported understanding how youth enacted literacies in social media spaces and how those literacy practices shaped their racialized experiences as Black and Latinx teens in today’s racially charged society. Data collection methods also provided insight into the unique identities of teens. Additional information about these data sources is below.

**Formal and Informal Interviews.** Semi-structured interviews provided insights into the participants’ racialized experiences, unfolding identities as Black and Latinx adolescents, and literacy practices. This data source helped me answer my research question by understanding the participants’ perceptions about their racialized experiences and how these experiences impacted their literacy practices and identities. The interviews allowed the adolescents to express themselves as minoritized young people in their lived experiences and online lives during a
timely racially charged social movement. The three semi-formal interviews with the six youth were semi-structured (see Appendices A, B, and C), allowing for guided conversations (Yin, 2013) to take place.

I conducted semi-structured interviews of each teen three times within the span of the study. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed. In the initial semi-structured interviews, I asked teens about their online engagement on social media, discussed how they engage in literacies, and how they thought their engagement on social media might benefit who they are as people, readers, writers, content creators, specifically focusing on the literacy practices in these unsanctioned spaces. The second formal semi-structured interview focused on youths' interpretations of their racialized experiences within and beyond online settings and explored what they were doing online that speaks to these experiences. During this interview, I asked teens to discuss an artifact from their social media. By asking them about artifacts in the interview, it allowed them to further expand on their literacy practices and explain how their involvement within online communities spoke to their lived experiences and perceptions regarding race relations. This second interview also allowed me to inquire about the literacy practices I observed on adolescents' social media sites. The third and final interview served as a way for the adolescents to share any final thoughts about their racialized experiences and perceptions as minoritized individuals and the impact on their literacy practices and identities. Also, these last interviews served as opportunities to ask questions that came up from the ongoing analysis I engaged in throughout the study. Beyond the semi-structured interviews, I also spoke to the teens informally. These informal conversations and interviews occurred through social media platforms in the form of public and private comments and reply messages, which were noted in my field notes.
**Observations.** Merriam (1998) recommended that case study researchers employ three data collection techniques, such as conducting interviews, observing, and analyzing documents. This section focuses on the data collection method, observations. In this study, I observed teens on various social media platforms as they did things such as posting, uploading, or sharing multimodal content. Early on in the study, the first few weeks, informal observations helped me become familiar with youth and their content. In the second and third months, these observations were formal. They allowed me to focus on how teens engaged in literacy practices and how those literacies influenced their content on social media platforms, particularly how they related to their racialized experiences and identities. I acted as a participant-observer, commenting, liking, and interacting with teens on the same social media platforms they were using. I took notes using the observation protocol I created (see Appendix D) for reference throughout this process. In addition, I observed general and specific things on teens’ individual and specific social media accounts. For example, generally speaking, I noted how teens saw themselves as readers, writers, content creators, and people of color. I also organized my notes from the observations chronologically and organized them by each participant when necessary. Specifically, I noted how teens situated themselves as literate beings and how the content they composed and reposted highlighted their racialized experiences and perceptions about their lives. During observations, I intended for my role to include observing, and I transitioned to a participant-observer role as I engaged with youth through comments and other forms of communication on social media platforms. Thus, I used an observation protocol (see Appendix D) to focus on the observable aspects of the literacy practices teens are engaging in on social media and their experiences and perceptions. The observation protocol helped me identify how teens reflected on their lived
experiences, the literacies they enact, and their autonomy and personal agency. Although I used a protocol, I remained open to emerging themes.

Field Notes. Since this study utilized a collective case study (Stake, 1995) methodology, specifically a multiple or multi-case study approach, I took detailed field notes using thick, rich descriptions during each observation (Merriam, 1998). I organized these notes chronologically according to the observation date and by social media platform and case. After each observation, I extended my notes by adding additional thoughts, initial themes and reflecting on how the observation and informal conversations, if any, with the teen during the observations helped answer my research question. Also, taking notes during online observations helped me note how minoritized adolescents enacted literacy practices in unsanctioned online spaces. Besides this, those notes allowed me to reflect on these adolescents' racialized experiences and perspectives. Additionally, these notes helped me establish initial themes, informed future interview questions, and revealed gaps in data collection. In alignment with Merriam and Tisdell (2016), who advocated for data organization such as field notes and reflective memos to ensure data is easily retrievable, allowing the researcher to make meaning by analyzing all the information about the case or cases brought together, these field notes supported my data analysis and the accuracy of my findings.

Artifacts. I collected various multimodal and digital artifacts to understand how teens of color expressed and engaged in literacies and how those literacy practices on social media shaped their racialized experiences and identity work. For instance, I collected artifacts participants composed, such as their writing, audio and video media, digital artwork, and other forms of multimodal and digital literacies they created, shared, and remixed (Gerber et al., 2017) from others. To capture some artifacts, I took screenshots of teens' content, including their stories
and feed; in other words, their main Instagram profile page, where they post photos and videos along with captions. Also, artifacts on Twitter were captured by screenshotting teens' tweets and home page, also known as a timeline. In addition, artifacts captured on the social media platform TikTok were captured by screen-recording the short videos adolescents shared. More so, on YouTube, artifacts consisted of teens' uploaded video content and text in their video's description box. I also screen-recorded this content on their channel. These artifacts were helpful as I attempted to understand how minoritized teens, specifically Black and Brown youth, engaged in literacies within social media.

These artifacts represented how these young people constructed and enacted literacy practices, engaged in identity work, and drew from their racialized experiences. The artifacts collected also contributed to my understanding of how social media spaces shaped teens' literacy practices. Thus, the data sources I used helped me understand how teens enacted literacy practices online and how those literacies impacted how they made sense of racialized experiences and identities. In addition, since I collected multiple data sources, it afforded me the opportunities to evaluate if the data supported a similar outcome, which, in return, strengthened the trustworthiness of my study (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I discuss trustworthiness further in this chapter. Nonetheless, knowing the importance of a quality study, I put a great deal of consideration and attention to this study's data collection and the data analysis process, and devoted myself to a rigorous methodological path (Yin, 2002), and recognized the benefits of my dedication to having formal and explicit procedures when conducting the research. In the section below, I discussed my process for data analysis.
Data Analysis

I draw from Merriam's (1998) process of analyzing case study data. More specifically, Merriam (1998) defined the data analysis process as making sense and meaning out of the data and explained how making sense of the data involves the researcher engaging in "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read (p. 178).” In true Merriam (1998) case study design, data collection, and analysis coincide. Similar to Merriam (1998), Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, "conveying an understanding of the case is the paramount consideration in analyzing the data (p. 233).” I analyzed data from interviews, field observations, and digital and multimodal artifacts in the multi-case study to guide the audience's understanding of the cases. Further, Baxter and Jack (2008) explained how qualitative research employs an inductive research strategy, and this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests the existing theory. I assumed this method during this research. Specifically, this study takes on Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) stance of multiple case studies, also known as comparative case studies, which involves collecting and analyzing data from several cases, resulting in a cross-case analysis. This study is a multiple case study and will result in two components to data analysis, which Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.234) characterized as within-case analysis (each case treated individually) and cross-case analysis (general building explanations across individual cases. Therefore, I interviewed teens, made observations of their social media practices on platforms, and collected digital and multimodal artifacts as I engaged in ongoing data analysis.

Specifically, I engaged in ongoing data analysis as I wrote analytic memos, read and looked for emerging themes within existing and ongoing data, drafted notes, and created narratives of each case. I wrote the data analysis in two parts; in particular, part one highlighted
findings from the individual youth, and part two presented the cross-case data analysis. This cross-case examined the similarities, differences, and conflicting and contradictory data presented in the individual cases in part one. In conjunction with Merriam's (1998) and Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) data analysis process, I drew from the data analysis structure of Muhammad's (2015a) study on the writing representations of Black adolescent girls. Specifically, I implemented elements of Muhammad's three phases, thematic analysis, member checking, and triangulation, to help me analyze, interpret, and triangulate data in this study. These stages were embedded in the phases of my data analysis and described in detail below.

**Data Analysis Phase One: Memos and Narratives of Each Case**

In phase one of data analysis, I wrote analytic memos on each case to reflect on the developing themes for individual teens'.

**Analytic Memos.** Writing analytic memos with thematic analysis in mind helped me answer my research question by allowing me to look for themes regarding the literacy practices and racialized experiences of each youth within online communities, such as social media platforms, and helped me write memos that I used to aid in creating narratives of each one of the teens in the study. Writing the analytic memos also helped me consider and record patterns in the data, as I reflected on data collection and ongoing data analysis. I used analytic memos to aid in maintaining a balance between emerging themes and answering my research questions, and as I noted themes, I examined them through the lens of my research questions to understand how the theme answered my research questions. Additionally, I used these memos to facilitate discussions with teens in the study, and during the last interview, I discussed them with participants. They were also shared via email, weekly with my chair, Dr. Amy Vetter, and discussed in one-on-one meetings bi-weekly to summarize the data analysis process and discuss
constructed themes. From those analytics memos, I drafted narratives of each case individually, presented in chapter V. Further, in phase one of the findings, I focused on composing case narratives to highlight the themes of individual cases.

**Thematic Analysis: Artifacts, Interviews, and Observations.** I conducted a thematic analysis of data collected, such as transcripts of three semi-structured interviews, observation field notes, analytic memos, and multimodal and digital artifacts, to investigate how adolescents engage in literacy practices as responses to their racialized experiences. Through case study analysis (Merriam, 1998), I first identified themes related to how minoritized youth reflected on their experiences and responded to them by composing digital and multimodal literacies. I conducted a second analysis review with the themes in mind, but this round focused solely on the interview data and the observations. A third and final pass through the data helped refine and confirm each case's final thematic categories. For example, I first examined artifacts from Tatum's Twitter and Instagram taking a thematic approach, then I went through the three transcripts of her three interviews from April, May, and June, and I reviewed the field notes and analytic memos to hone in on observation data of Tatum's Twitter and Instagram accounts. After going through this process, Tatum's final case narrative included the following three themes, specifically, (a) *Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard*, (b) *Allyship and AntiHate: Standing Against Fighting Hate with Hate*, and (c) *Necessary Conversations That Must Take Place Where Respect Goes a Long Way* to describe how she enacted literacy practices in social media spaces related to her racialized experiences and how it shaped her identity. Overall, in this initial data analysis phase, themes were highlighted individually within each case. After looking at the patterns, trends, and commonalities within individual case narratives, I
presented themes for the cross-case analysis described in phase two of the findings below, highlighting the conundrums and similarities and differences across the cases.

**Data Analysis Phase Two: Cross-Case Analysis**

Before the cross-case analysis, I wrote individual case narratives, which allowed me to focus on individual cases in the study. In each narrative, I began by providing background on the case, offering the reader context on teens. Next, I referenced specific instances from the data (i.e., quotes from interviews, observational notes, artifacts) to further illuminate the themes within the narrative. Examining analyzed data from each teen helped me further understand their online literacy practices, specifically their social media literacies, and the impact on their identities as youth of color. After analyzing each case in phase one, I developed an understanding of the cases as a whole by looking for patterns, commonalities, and shared meaning across the six cases. Initially, I reread each case narrative and noted notably similar patterns. I also reread the cases and noted patterns similar to some but not present in all. Then, with the commonalities from phase one data and the study's research questions in mind, I developed a preliminary cross-case list, which included (a) *social justice movements, race, and police brutality*; (b) *supporting marginalized communities*; (c) *change and politics*; (d) *youth voice centered in allyship, activism, and advocacy*; and (d) *youth's hopes, dreams, passions, and goals* to consider overlap and patterns within the case narrative data and used this to develop the cross-case themes.

Therefore, in phase two of data analysis, I wrote a cross-case analysis to address the patterns, trends, and uncertainties among all the cases. Taking a collective approach, I did not just focus solely on clear-cut differences and similarities but also spoke to the conundrums that allowed me to question and problematize my analysis, looking for conflicting and contradictory
ways that all my cases used literacies on social media related to their racialized experiences. For example, in cross-case theme three, *We the People: Marginalized Teens use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism*, I not only concentrated on the similarities and differences in how teens used social media as an avenue to participate in the world now as change agents, but I also honed in on content that problematized societal things such as a lack of representation and inclusion, accountability, and education, and the role of power relations, which became sub-themes for this overarching cross-case theme. Here, I looked at the ways all of my cases used social media as a way to rewrite the law of the land, beyond a Black and White approach to data, but centering my emphasis on the unclear moments that may have puzzled me initially, to name sub-themes I noticed developing in the data. This cross-case analysis also supported my discovery into how the individual teens' themes established earlier related or contradicted each other. Further analysis revealed other patterns and themes that emerged across cases, which I presented in three overall themes and sub-themes described in chapter six.

In the trustworthiness section that follows, I provided further information about member checking and triangulation in this study to speak to the internal validity of the study and my reliability as a researcher. The following steps outline how I furthered the trustworthiness of this study and addressed the study's limitations in detail.

**Trustworthiness**

In an exhaustive framework, Merriam (1998) provided six strategies to enhance internal validity: (1) triangulation, (2) member checks, (3) long-term observation, (4) peer examination, (5) participatory research, and (6) disclosure of researcher bias. Also, Merriam (1998) offered three techniques to ensure a researcher's reliability: (1) explanation of the investigator's position
with regards to the study, (2) triangulation, and (3) the use of an audit trail. Last, Merriam (1998) explained three techniques to enhance the external validity of a case method study: (1) use of thick description, (2) typicality or modal categories, and (3) multi-site designs. She also gave the researcher autonomy by suggesting they could use the details in their study to see if their conclusions made sense, allowing them to trust their judgments as long as they were from the case study data (Merriam 1988). In this study, I adhered to all of Merriam’s (1998) guidelines to enhance internal and external validity and ensure my reliability as a researcher. Below, I provide specific information on how I intentionally implemented strategies to increase the study’s trustworthiness, explicitly paying attention to internal validity, researcher reliability, and external validity.

**Internal Validity: Data Analysis Within Both Phases**

**Member Checks.** Member checking helped answer my research questions by intentionally focusing on accurately representing youth, which is especially important since I attempted to portray minoritized adolescents' narratives. With the lens focused on the participants, I systematically checked the data and my narrative account of Black and Brown youth experiences and perspectives, accurately portraying them. Consequently, engaging in the member checking process also allowed me to systematically receive feedback from the participants about using the raw data to make the conclusions I made in their narratives. In this study, I conducted member checking formally and informally. Throughout the study, I used data (i.e., transcripts from interviews, observation field notes, and the data I collected from their social media accounts), analytic memos, and narratives from phase one of data analysis as sources for each participant to comment, specifically on their words and actions. In addition, member checking was utilized when I analyzed artifacts such as adolescents' content (i.e., posts
such as video and pictures, shares, uploads, etc.) so that my interpretations of these artifacts, which are part of the narratives I wrote, best represented the participants in the study. Informal opportunities for member checking also arose during the three semi-structured interviews. Here, I asked teens to talk about how I interpreted my analysis. Also, I asked participants what their social media content said about their racialized experiences or other people of color's racialized experiences who were part of their community. Throughout the member checking process, I asked participants if the themes I generated in phase one of data analysis make sense, whether they think I developed them with sufficient evidence, and whether the overall narrative I wrote of them was realistic and accurate. As a result, I incorporated some of my cases' comments into the cross-case analysis. In the second phase of data analysis, the cross-case, I engaged in member checks with each one of my participants. Completing member checks during the cross-case analysis helped me make sure the individual narratives from phase one of the data analysis were accurate. Therefore, the participants added credibility to the study by having a chance to react to their data and individual narratives from phase one and cross-case. I provide further information on member checks in the trustworthiness section below during the discussion of internal validity.

**Triangulation.** I engaged in triangulation, Muhammad's (2015a) third phase of data collection, throughout both data analysis phases within this study. To do so, I compared adolescents' artifacts and interviews with the observations and field notes to triangulate the findings and strengthen my findings' interpretation. By collecting multiple forms of data such as semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts in the study, I triangulated data in this research. Doing so helped demonstrate that the data reported within the study and interpretations made from that data are accurate (Eisenhart, 2006), intended for representing qualitative data. Also, it is essential to use several methods. For example, in the study, I took notes during
observations of the video content uploaded and posted by adolescents, and I interviewed the study participants. In addition, I observed adolescents in real-time as they posted content and conducted semi-structured interviews with them. In addition, I triangulated data as I composed data write-ups. For example, I wrote narratives of each case study. Then, I engaged in cross-case analysis. These analyses were written in two separate findings sections, with individual cases represented first, followed by a cross-case analysis. In sum, the following six elements of Merriam’s (1998) internal validity strategies were considered to further the study's trustworthiness.

1. **Triangulation.** As mentioned in the *Internal Validity: Data Analysis Within Both Phases* section above, I collected three forms of data: semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts such as the content from adolescents' multimodal compositions. By doing so, I engaged in a triangulation of the data, further confirming the accuracy of the data analysis and thematic findings. By triangulating data sources, I provided multiple perspectives and strengthened my findings in both phases, increasing the study's validity.

2. **Member Checks.** Creswell and Miller (2000) spoke to how crucial member checking is as a technique that establishes credibility. The validity procedure shifts from me, the researcher, to the study's participants through member checking. As I mentioned above, while discussing data analysis, to engage in this process, I shared notes from my analytic memos and raw data and early and ongoing interpretations with my study's participants to confirm the credibility of the information and my description of it. By seeking ongoing feedback on my preliminary analysis and emerging findings, themes, and inquiry about the data
collected, such as using interview transcripts to discuss what was said and how I interpreted it, I identified an ongoing basis, areas I misinterpreted during and after data collection and analysis through feedback from the participants.

3. *Long-term Observation.* I observed various social media platforms during this three-month study. Specifically, I engaged in case study methods, observing six teens from April 2021-July 2021. This long-term observation occurred as I aimed to spend an adequate amount of time engaging in data collection during the study to the point of reaching saturation.

4. *Peer Examination.* Since I am the sole researcher for this study, peer examination is crucial to further increase the study’s trustworthiness (Cresswell, 2013). I met with my advisor and doctoral committee chair, Dr. Amy Vetter, every two weeks during the data analysis process. These biweekly meetings with my chair helped me with data analysis, specifically thematic data analysis. Also, early on, I met with my doctoral committee during the planning process, which helped me by being critical of the methodological choices I was taking on, specifically plans for data collection. Thus, peer-debriefing occurred as I worked together with my dissertation chair, who served as an impartial individual who helped examine my methodological choices, including data collection and analysis, reading analytic memos, fieldnotes, and providing feedback to enhance credibility and ensure the validity of this study. In addition, through our regular biweekly meetings, my chair served as a critical friend. Here, I was given free rein to talk about our research and was offered insights. Overall, peer debriefing helped me become more aware of my opinions regarding the data and exposed me to a neutral view.
In addition, through our regular biweekly meetings, my chair served as a critical friend. Here, I was given free rein to talk about our research and was offered insights. Overall, peer debriefing helped me become more aware of my opinions regarding the data and exposed me to a neutral view.

5. Participatory Research. Though I did not engage in participatory research with this study, I drew upon the experiences of minoritized youth involved and sought to represent them adequately. They did not participate in conducting the research; however, I sought to center their voices as I positioned them as voices worth listening to and understanding.

6. Disclosure of Researcher Bias. See the section above titled Researcher Positionality and Bias. In this section, I addressed the potential bias in the study.

**Researcher’s Reliability**

The following three elements central to a researcher’s reliability are explained below to show how I intended to further the trustworthiness of this study.

**Investigator’s position.** See the section above, Researcher Positionality and Bias, in the Research Design section, where I provided a sense of my positionality as a researcher in relation to the study.

**Triangulation.** As referenced in the Internal Validity: Data Analysis Within Both Phases section above, I return to triangulation here to express my reliability as a researcher. Because I collected three forms of data, specifically semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts such as the content from adolescents' multimodal compositions, I engaged in a triangulation of the data, further confirming the accuracy of the data analysis and thematic findings, which provided multiple perspectives and strengthened my findings in phases one and two.
Audit trail. I kept an audit trail of my collective case study using a researcher journal. For example, I recorded how I collected my data, developed categories, and themes, and made researcher decisions throughout the study. Besides keeping a researcher journal, I wrote analytic memos on an ongoing basis, explicitly writing one memo each week for three months. These memos captured data that stood out over the week for each of the six teens and highlighted specific observations. The memos also reflected on the case study process and included my reflections, questions, and decisions regarding the study.

External Validity

In the section below, I addressed the following elements to attend to external validity to further the trustworthiness of this study.

Use of thick description. I kept detailed notes in my researcher's journal and weekly memos, writing detailed, thick descriptions on an ongoing basis to strengthen the validity of my study, and in return, included these descriptions in phase one of my findings.

Multi-site designs. The study's design spanned multiple social media sites; thus, I conducted the study across various online contexts such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube.

Additional Strategies for Promoting Trustworthiness

Adding to Merriam (1998), scholars Merriam and Tisdell (2016) provided eight strategies for promoting validity and reliability in basic qualitative research study designs, which included: triangulation, member checks/respondent validation, adequate engagement in data collection (i.e., saturation), researcher's position or reflexivity, peer-review examination, audit trail, detailed, thick descriptions, and maximum variation (i.e. sample selection) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 259) which are all addressed above, except for maximum variation and researcher's
position or reflexivity. I do not attend to the maximum variation of the sample selection in this study because I did not seek a wide variety of participants. Instead, I specifically sought a small number of Black and Latinx adolescents or young adults, aiming for six in case two dropped off due to the pandemic and online nature of the study. In addition, as the researcher's position or reflexivity, I kept a detailed research journal throughout the study. I wrote my thinking process, ideas, interpretations, connections, and reflections related to data collection and ongoing data analysis in this journal. Thus, the purpose was to record my thinking throughout the study. I monitored my biases and subjectivity as the primary instrument in this qualitative data collection and analysis process by engaging in reflexivity. That being said, reflexivity was an imperative tool used to address positionality issues and attended to my intentional decision to include strategies for promoting trustworthiness such as triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and other tools throughout this study to promote research integrity.

**Case Study Narratives.** Adding to the study's trustworthiness, during the data analysis process, I wrote narratives for each of the six teens, and then I revisited each narrative to reread through them, focusing on intentionally taking myself out of them as much as possible. The purpose of doing so was to write from the teen's perspective as much as possible. I sought to capture their experiences, where literacy and race intersected, and decentered my voice as much as possible while engaging in this process.

A discussion of the limitations of the study is to follow.

**Limitations**

This study contained certain limitations, as with any research study. Specifically, some limitations have to do with the work being a qualitative research study, which comes with the usual general criticism this research field gets. Other limitations exist in the study's research
design and implementation. Starting with a common critique of qualitative research, one limitation of this study is that, like all qualitative studies, findings cannot be generalized beyond the study sample, as quantitative research lends itself. Consequently, one minor limitation noted is the small number of cases included in the study, precisely six cases, the youth in this research. Since my participant size was small but within typical case study research, this limitation linked to generalizability, and the overall qualitative data I collected, which resulted in the study's findings. However, this study does not seek to generalize the findings and instead positions this work as having potential for transferability, applying the study's findings in contexts and settings similar to this study and participants alike, such as teens of color.

Since, like this study, qualitative research studies usually are not meant to be generalizable, I sought to minimize limitations associated with transferability. In order to do so, the methods allow readers to trace the logic and determine whether the study's findings may be reliable when thinking about further inquiry on young people's literacy practices in online spaces. In order to assure the dependability of the findings of the study, I provided an extensive explanation of the methods I used and the degree to which they were effective, thus, explaining specific details of the study design and its implementation in the data collection and data analysis sections of the methodology sections above. By doing so, I am able to confirm my understandings, interpretations, and conclusions by establishing an audit trail (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of procedures for collecting data to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

Another foreseen methodological limitation is specific to the online nature of the study, specifically the social media platforms themselves. In other words, I may have missed some data collection opportunities since youths' content could appear only briefly on particular social media platforms, depending on how they shared content. For example, if youth shared content in
a way that allowed for availability for a certain amount of time, such as a 24-hour timeframe, on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, which is not saved for viewing at a later time, I may have missed data collection opportunities.

One limitation of the study was the lack of male participants. Six teens, only one of whom were male, participated in this study focused on how students of color engage with literacy practices online within the context of social media. The one male teen, who identified as a Black male, was a previous participant in a pilot study where I facilitated a critical literacy workshop for marginalized youth over the pandemic. Using case study methods, as I did with this dissertation study, I examined how marginalized youth in the workshop engaged in literacy identity work through counterstorying and how that counterstorying helped them make sense of societal representations of race and culture. In this study, he was one of two Black male participants out of four teens; however, he was the sole male teen of color in the dissertation study, which provided another limitation because he was also the least active participant as far as social media activity was concerned, saying he only posted when he felt moved to. Adding to the discussion, an additional limitation of this study was the lack of Latino/Latinx male participants. There was no Latino male representation in this study, and as mentioned above, only one male of color in general; however, Latinx representation was present as two female teens identified as Latina and one as Latine. Still, I could not secure more males for the study, such as another Black male or a male who self-identified as Latino or of Latinx descent; therefore, a prominent voice was missing from this study, specifically the voice of a Latinx male teen. To acknowledge the lack of male participants in my work, I suggested that more research occurs with males in the future implications section of my discussion.
Continuing the discussion of participants, one limitation of the study is the difficulty of securing participants, hence the recruitment method design. Since I started the dissertation during the pandemic, doing a small-scale study based on a convenience sample would have been an easier task; however, I attempted an ambitious research study that required me to secure participants from across the country, which proved challenging. Though I recruited six teens from four states, recruiting using virtual methods alone was a limitation of this work. Face-to-face recruitment methods with physical interaction, outside of social media direct messages, comments, emails, and Zoom recruitment meetings would have helped build rapport with prospective participants and their guardians, when applicable. Since we were in the midst of a pandemic and most teens were out of state, online recruitment efforts were in place, which proved to be, at times, a limitation to the design, implementation, and relationship-building with participants.

Expanding on relationships, this discussion of recruitment brings about another layer of limitation, namely trust and relationships, which were challenging due to the online nature of the study, causing an additional limit surrounding participants, mainly since this study's context was centered on race-related topics with youth that I had no prior relationship with outside of the two previous students. Despite this limitation, I built trust and fostered positive relationships with youth as best as possible within an online environment related to the study design and implementation. I attended to this limitation during recruitment through the work I did to build trust. For example, I created a short introduction video about the project, and myself, an About Me PowerPoint slide that included pictures of me, and other images that described my personal and professional experiences, interests, and background. The goal was for teens to get to know me right away. In addition to the multimodal components, I scheduled virtual meetings with
participants' parents before obtaining their consent and assent from teens under 18. In these meetings, I talked with parents about the project’s goals, and my background in education, answering their questions and attending to their concerns. Last, other work I did during recruitment to build trust was to share my professional social media accounts, which I created prior to recruitment to engage in this work. Teens were able to look at my platforms, which showed me through the lens of a doctoral student and just as a person of color, and saw recent content I shared, such as pictures of me and social justice-related content, which I argue added to the work I did to build trust.

Extending the focus on participants, I attended to this study's limitations by assuring that their participation was voluntary and informing participants that they could stop participating at any point during the study. This online study went through the required IRB process of obtaining parental consent and assent of minors, which ensured participation was voluntary, which in return, helped minimize possible coercion. In addition, I used self-selected pseudonyms for all teens, ensuring that their identities were protected. Also, to check my interpretations and conclusions of data, I included bi-weekly supervisor debriefing in the data collection and analysis process and continuous member checks in the moment and through informal follow-up conversations and semi-structured interviews after engaging in researcher reflection.

A final and potential limitation of this study was that two of the six teens were previous students of mine. I did not know the other four teens before they agreed to participate in the study. The two I had prior relationships with lived in the same state as I do and were previous students of mine when I taught seventh-grade language arts, specifically, one teen, Camila, whom I taught four years before the study, and the other teen, Johnavan, who participated in my pilot study, and I taught just one year before this research project. To address this limitation, I
purposefully sought to include at least four other teens who did not have a relationship with me prior to the study. Nevertheless, this limitation is grounded in my existing relationships with two teens. Our relationship as former teacher-student likely influenced the way I observed and interacted with the students, and it may also have impacted how and what the former students shared during the interviews. On the contrary, I argue that knowing the two teens might have been an affordance since they trusted me.

In sum, as noted in the data analysis discussion above, this study took a qualitative approach. In particular, its design was influenced by case study methodology, in that I engaged in inquiry to explore, in-depth, several individuals or cases, specifically six who were bounded by time and activity (Stake, 1995), and as the researcher, I collected detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures, namely interviews, observations, and artifacts, over a sustained period of time, precisely three months, and, as such, I highlighted the voices of the participants as they engaged in social media literacies. Through this process, I engaged in data analysis in an ongoing process during the research. Discussion of sampling techniques further emphasized this focus in that observations, interviews, informal conversations, and teens' online artifacts, including work samples, further highlighted how they engaged in literacy practices and how their agency fostered those engagements. Implementing purposeful sampling (Cresswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994) created possibilities for identifying and selecting participants who might best result in information-rich cases related to the study. I am aware that purposive sampling is likely to cause research bias because of the nature of researchers making subjective or generalized assumptions with this type of sampling. However, this study's credibility is not questionable because I based sampling on clear criteria and used proper judgment in the process, selecting participants that would best help me understand the ways youth of color engage with
literacy practices online and provide the best data to answer the research question and sub-question. While limitations of this study did exist, strategies were put into place to minimize limitations, as noted in this section. To conclude, although this study had limitations worth mentioning, it is imperative to note that the limitations mentioned above do not reduce or lessen the significance of the conclusions I draw from the data. However, instead, these limitations serve as a way to add to my trustworthiness as a researcher, providing evidence of my reflexivity and the critical reflection process I engaged in, which highlights my transparency in the research process.

Having established the methodological design of this dissertation study, I now turn to the findings sections. In particular, I first explore the perspectives and experiences of marginalized teens within social media spaces and how they use online literacy practices to make changes in their society. Then, I explore how Dakarai, Tatum, Samirah X, Laura, Camila, and Johnavan represent six unique or intrinsic cases (Stake, 1995), paying particular attention to their advocacy and identity work through social media literacies. Finally, I take a cross-case approach to explore the similar, different, and contradictory ways teens engage in literacy practices on social media and how it shapes their identities.

**Chapter Summary**

In sum, case studies are an ideal method for exploring Black and Brown adolescents' literacy practices and racialized experiences because it supports the researcher's ability to research beyond school contexts such as camps, after-school programs, community centers, and affords possibilities into cases' practices in virtual settings such as social media platforms. The findings of case studies within online contexts can still be shared in school settings and expanded to online spaces such as writing blogs, community workshops, and local professional
development opportunities. In this way, the case study reaches people who may not read scholarly articles, a great affordance grounded in the versatility of where you research and how you share the knowledge gained from the case study. Thus, as stated in chapter II, I draw from the CRT paired with BlackCrit, and LatCrit epistemologies to name and understand youths' literacies in social media spaces, calling attention to how race and racism are continuously present in Black and Brown teen experiences, both in literacy and lived experiences. Through a multicase study approach highlighted in this chapter, I presented the procedures I employed to respond to the guiding research questions of this study.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS FROM PHASE ONE: THEMATIC CASE STUDY NARRATIVES

OF BLACK AND BROWN TEENS’ SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACIES

What are good intentions without purposeful action? What good are honey coated words, if they merely result in empty promises? – Dakari

Dakari’s quote about engaging in online literacy practices for intentional social action represents the central component that tied the six teens of color in this study together. Here, marginalized teens like Dakari privilege the idea of how activism can change things and call attention to the lack of change from just words alone. This chapter explores how individualized cases engaged in literacy practices on social media related to their racialized experiences and how it shaped their identity. First, I will offer more description of the participants in this chapter, to highlight the history and context of a case. Doing so provides the reader with necessary information on who these teens are, outside of their social media profiles, which in return, allowed me to shape their personal and literacy experiences. Next, I will describe themes in each case study narrative (Table 4) to discuss how each teen navigated social media as a young person of color; even though they may have been a member of a community of people of color, they brought unique perspectives and experiences to various social media and in return, uniquely engaged in a space where literacy and advocacy met. In these narratives, I used their voices to recognize and appreciate their race-related experiences, perspectives as young people of color, and intersectional identity work. Therefore, this chapter hones in on six individual cases to answer the questions: How do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences, and How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and
These case narratives became the basis for the cross-case analysis, which I describe in chapter VI.

Table 4. Thematic Table for Teens' Individual Case Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teen</th>
<th>Individual Theme 1</th>
<th>Individual Theme 2</th>
<th>Individual Theme 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tatum</td>
<td>Black teens front and center: A call to being seen and heard</td>
<td>Allyship and anti-hate: Standing against fighting hate with hate</td>
<td>Necessary conversations that must take place where respect goes a long way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakarai</td>
<td>Black youth take on systemic racism</td>
<td>Creating change as a content creator</td>
<td>Why Wait to be a Grown-up to Change the World?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samirah X</td>
<td>#MyBlackisbeautiful</td>
<td>#Blackgirlmagicpersonified</td>
<td>#FedUp#NoJusticeNoPeace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>For the people</td>
<td>Climate activist meets advocate for racial justice</td>
<td>Stop making us uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camila</td>
<td>Dominicana to the core</td>
<td>My patience right now for this world is slim to non-existent</td>
<td>Justice being served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnavan</td>
<td>America’s double standards on display</td>
<td>Athleticism intersecting with social justice</td>
<td>The new #Black kid in town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The section that follows introduces Tatum’s narrative.

Tatum’s Historical and Contextual Description

Tatum advocated for people of color, specifically women and the LGBTQIA+ community, especially those of color, through her writing on Instagram, Twitter, and blogs. She also engaged in podcasts and interviews. Tatum wrote for several local organizations, including news and journalism outlets and youth programs. This section summarizes some of her writing to provide a sense of what she wrote about and advocated for outside of social media. For example, in her local newspaper outlet, Tatum wrote several pieces. One about high school musicians and dancers who were heartbroken at missing Carnival parades due to the COVID-19 pandemic and
dedicated the story to band members and dancers, who, according to her, do not get enough spotlight. She also wrote a fiction piece about Gen Z and witches, which centers on a typical young woman of color, who is obsessed with rap music, Twitter trends, hanging with friends, and TikTok, who happens to be a 19-year-old witch living in an American city filled with French culture. In addition, Tatum wrote about how hard it is to find Black women's representation in the journalism field and reflected on her journey to pursue a journalism career as a Black female.

Beyond writing, Tatum participated in a podcast episode debate for a junior journalist program to advocate for prospective college students of color to feel okay with not attending an HBCU. Here she discussed the cons of HBCUs and offered her perspective of why Predominantly White Institutions or Private White Institutions (PWIs) is a better option for Black teens, while her teen counterpart discussed the pros of HBCUs and their importance to Black college students. Using her voice as a junior journalist, Tatum not only wrote about news, what she was passionate about, and what is impactful to her, she adopted the identity as the voice for the voiceless. Using her voice as a junior journalist, Tatum not only wrote about news, what she is passionate about, and what is impactful to her, she adopted the identity as the voice for the voiceless. Below I provide an example of Tatum's writing that represents her the most. Her involvement in podcasts, which included being a guest on an NPR podcast focused on politics and culture, where she and other teens discussed how to make civic education better to young people in the United States and wrote an accompanying blog, adds to Tatum's satisfaction from "letting her voice be known." In the NPR podcast episode, Tatum discussed her experiences and opinions on what young people need to learn in civic education. In the civics education blog accompanying the podcast, Tatum and other teens recommended civic education related to teens' lives. With Tatum leading the narrative, they wrote,
Even though many young people do not get good civics education, we still want to be active in the political process. If we don't receive it in school, we will most likely turn to social media to get our information. Tatum had no idea who Donald Trump was until he started trending on Twitter in 2016. Nothing at school teaches her to be engaged in voting, to learn about the candidates, or the political process…But during this election cycle, we see more on social media about why we should vote and more encouragement to do early voting on social platforms. Some of Tatum's friends who were never interested in voting saw constant posts on their Instagram feed of voting resources and got more interested in voting. As a way to encourage them to vote, Tatum said to them that it takes about the same amount of time to create an Instagram account as it does to register to vote.

This example demonstrated the importance of educators in making civics education relatable and how valuable getting young people involved in the content of civics education is. Tatum brings a new perspective that compares students’ civic education in this country to the time it takes to register to vote to create an Instagram account. Here, Tatum used her voice to advocate for change in the educational system. In sum, Tatum is very outspoken and even identifies herself as a rebel. Tatum is passionate about the environment, making changes, and standing up for her beliefs. She is very active in her school and is the Class President, head photographer of the schools’ media team, part of her high school choir, and in the top 5% of the school. Tatum is also a youth leader for teens in her local community, serving as a member of many local youth programs and holding several leadership roles in those areas; for one, she works with her local transit program as a Youth Transit Leadership Cohort Lead and feels transit “should
be more widespread to the youth and better explained. I feel like we should have more events that are more youth-inclusive. My goals are to make it more accessible for high school students and for college students.” Outside of her community, she served as an Editorial Advisor for national organizations. She wants to be her own boss, study mass communications, public relations, and marketing, become a CEO of an international PR firm, and is an ally and member of the LGBTQIA+ community. She enjoys debating, frequently uses Twitter to discuss her experiences and perceptions on topics of (anti)racism, (in)equity, (in)justice, and support and awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Case Narrative

This section highlights Tatum's thematic case narrative, specifically how she enacted literacy practices on social media related to her racialized experiences, and describes how those literacies shape her identity. In this section, I describe the main theme, Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard, and the sub-themes, (a) Using Platforms for Self-expression; (b) Healing Through Speaking, and (c) Feeling Seen, Loved, and Supported is a Treasure to provide a narrative of how Tatum enacted literacy practices on Instagram and Twitter related to her experiences as a Black teen of color who identified as a pansexual and how her literacy practices shaped her identity.

Theme 1: Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard

Often, marginalized youth are not afforded opportunities to be in the spotlight while voicing their own stories. This reoccurring idea is that Black teens need spaces to use their talents, which in some cases is their voice. In our first interview, Tatum expressed, "Like that's my purpose in life to use my voice. I have this big voice that God gifted me, and like this big
personality that I have where I have to use it...I love speaking for like marginalized groups that I love. You know giving people a voice and being a voice for the voiceless. I love it." Tatum supports youth not being silenced and includes social media as one of many platforms teens can use to be heard. For example, she uses Twitter to express her opinions on disagreeing with the notion that "trans people shouldn't participate in sports cisgender [people]." In our first interview, she explained how she placed her voice front and center of the discussion her student body was having regarding trans and high school sports, saying, "I voiced my opinion on Twitter and then like whoever sees it, sees it like and if you feel whatever, it's cool, and I still feel like you need to be educated, and I can educate you without being disrespectful always." Though this is the case for Tatum, she can recognize how rare being seen and heard is to other Black teens. To follow, I present three sub-themes, specifically, (a) Using Platforms for Self-expression; (b) Healing Through Speaking, and (c) Feeling Seen, Loved, and Supported is a Treasure to speak to the way Tatum uses social media literacies on Instagram and Twitter as an avenue to express herself, use her voice on the platform to heal, and promoting a feeling of being valued, all related in some way to her race and racialized experiences.

**Using Platforms for Self-expression.** Tatum tweeted, "i'm about to start a podcast for Black teenagers and a LOT of my followers have strong controversial opinions... y'all should come speak your peace." As a teen with many platforms to express herself, Tatum desires to create spaces where Black teens can express themselves. Here, she is offering to use a podcast platform to provide that space for her followers, which happen to be a majority Black audience on Twitter, to be at the front and center of their universe and, at the same time, accessible to others. Tatum uses her voice in many journalism avenues and her roles in youth council to her mayor and congresswoman. In addition, Tatum uses her voice as student body president of her
high school class to express herself. Tatum recognizes that some of her peers do not have the same opportunities to be seen and heard or have the same access to stages. Therefore, she has a personal goal to provide a platform for Black teens who have not had her opportunities. In the next sub-theme, I share the ways Tatum used social media to advocate for speaking up, thus, encouraging the healing of people of color related to the effects of the injustices, unfortunately, within their racialized experiences.

**Healing through Speaking.** Using her Twitter to highlight her perspective on how teens of color need constant opportunities to speak about their racialized experiences, trauma, and issues that require healing. Tatum retweeted, "how can you heal what you never revealed? Make it a standard to allow black boys to speak they transgressions willingly." To her, being able to talk about what you are going through is important to heal as a person. In the Black community, being able to heal through using your voice is not common. For example, in our second interview, Tatum revealed how she healed herself by speaking to a therapist after being denied the opportunity to have counsel from her parents. She also spoke about how she was depressed and how counseling helped her heal. She stated,

> I was going through really, really, really bad depression this year. Really horrible, really close to sending me to a facility that you know I didn't want to go to some certainty, but they were really close because they were really afraid for me, so my mom's just like crying like I need you to stay in the ring and fight and this is what I need you to do. You cannot give up. I think I was frustrated because I thought that it was my mom and my dad holding me back from just living life, and you know...But before I was just ready, I was ready, and so I wanted them to understand and hear and feel how I felt about everything and so and I had asked to go to therapy; they didn't send me to therapy, so I was just low.
Yeah, very, very low. And so now I'm in therapy, I'm happy, more free like I can do more things and go out more.

In the next sub-theme, Tatum's literacy practices on social media are presented to show how people of color desire to feel seen, loved, and supported for who they are and how Tatum advocates for people of color, who are different in their unique ways, to get the support they need.

**Feeling Seen, Loved, and Supported is a Treasure.** On Twitter, Tatum retweeted a tweet that read, “Last day playing Jamal [face emoji]. PSA to let the funny, weird black boys in your life be funny and weird. Show them love and support and make them feel seen. You never know what treasures they may uncover. [Black praying hand emoji] The original tweet was from Brett Gray, a young Black male actor most known for playing the character Jamal on Netflix’s series, *On My Block.* The show is set in what it describes as “a rough Los Angeles neighborhood,” where “four smart, funny and streetwise teens find their lifelong friendship tested as they begin high school.” It is evident through discussions with Tatum that she supports youth being able to live their authentic lives without feeling as if they are not being seen for who they are. She also supports the idea that youth need to be loved and supported even if they do not fit the typical standard, stereotype, or assumption of what society says they are supposed to be.

More specifically, Tatum advocates for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically the trans community, to be seen and heard. In support of individuals in the community needing love, Tatum, in our first interview, said, "I completely disagree with the fact that of marginalizing any community and I am part of the LGBTQIA+ community so seeing one letter of the Community freak out and suffer like that is hard." To summarize, Tatum discussed the bullying that LGBTQIA+ community members go through and, in return, become silent,
dealing with trauma internally. She calls for people to become allies, speak up, and help the LGBTQIA+ community, speaking to the fear of those who identify as trans feel over coming out.
In addition, Tatum also advocated for herself, a Black pansexual young woman. Tatum explained her sexual orientation and place in the LGBTQIA community, saying, "I'm pansexual, so I didn't really know how to describe exactly what I was like who identified as and like. What I knew was that I loved people, but I didn't know exactly what that was called, and I felt my first exposure to the LGBTQIA+ community was on social media. I learned all of those things from social media. Now I'm like this is, who I am. This is what this is called. I don't have to put a title on it, but there is a title for what I am and whom I identify as, and it helped me, you know, figure out what I like and who I am as a person." Having a personal connection to this, Tatum embraces the idea of showing love, support, and making marginalized people feel seen and has a special connection to uncovering the treasures of those Black youth seen as different, or in the case of the retweet, Black boys seen as “funny and weird.”

To follow, I present the second main theme, Allyship and Anti Hate: Standing Against Fighting Hate with Hate to showcase how Tatum used Instagram and Twitter to highlight how she enacted literacy practices related to her racialized experiences and how those literacy practices shaped her identities. To do so, she focused on the need to resist hate without taking the easy way out, which she describes as more hate. Instead, Tatum advocates for allyship and anti-hate to stand against hate related to race and racism.

**Theme 2: Allyship and Anti Hate: Standing Against Fighting Hate with Hate**

Most marginalized people experience ongoing racism and are denied the justice to hold individuals responsible for their discriminatory treatment. Rather than grow resentful of that lack of justice, Tatum called for the Black community to avoid fighting hate against oppressors by
creating more hate. One alternative approach that Tatum advocates for is celebrating allies who support, rather than oppress, marginalized people Tatum, identifying as a Black cisgender woman who is pansexual, privileges the relationships in her life with White people who have served as allies to her as a fellow ally and member of the LGBTQIA+ community and her life journey. Despite the people around her who hated the actions of many White people due to how Black people were receiving racism, hate, police brutality, injustice, and a lack of regard for Black lives, Black joy, and Black experiences. To follow, I present three sub-themes, specifically, (a) *That Didn’t Exactly Stick to my Core*, (b) *Just Because You’re Black Doesn’t Mean you Have to Hate White People*, and (c) *How you get Seen in the Black Community is Completely Different*, all highlight the way Tatum employed literacies on Instagram and Twitter to understand her unique racialized experiences and her uncommon race-related perspectives, which made her stand out in the contexts she occupied. In the first sub-theme, *That Didn’t Exactly Stick to my Core*, I present Tatum's experiences in predominantly Black spaces to in part express her concern with minoritized populations, such as the Black community's negative relationship with White people due to issues of racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. This shows the hostile environment hate can cause, often spewing more hate

**That Didn’t Exactly Stick to my Core.** In her third interview, Tatum discussed how her experience at an all Black high school often put her in positions that she did not always support. She explained,

So I went to an all Black high school. They had that mentality of…like the HBCU experience, and they teach us how to be strong Black [people] and that whole stigma that didn't exactly stick to my core, which is why the reason why I feel like I am such an activist…In different classroom situations where I was the one that spoke out…Black
people feel like they have to hate white people and I'm like I have a lot of white friends. I have a lot of white cohorts…and I respect them as individuals, just as they should respect us as individuals and people, so I can't sit here and constantly let you have this conversation or discredit anybody.

Here, Tatum explained how her Black peers and her predominantly Black environment, often appeared to have a negative view of Whites based on their racialized experiences. She added on, "And that's even with the white people that I follow [on social media] their like really respectful, and all the white friends I have are all really respectful, really nice, and they support us, and they believe that all the things that we believe are wrong and they really are like huge allies." Tatum does not conform to the perspectives of her school community and displays her activism by speaking against the overwhelming hate towards people who marginalized those of her very own race. She does the same on social media as well, particularly her Twitter. In the next sub-theme, *Just Because You're Black Doesn't Mean you Have to Hate White People*, I focused on how Tatum used Twitter to advocate for the inclusion of Whites in predominantly Black spaces, and in return, how you can embrace *Blackness*, without hating the counterpart.

*Just Because You're Black Doesn't Mean you Have to Hate White People*. Tatum retweeted, “i don’t understand the gatekeeper attitude...i don’t like when y'all try to gate keep anything that was formed by a black person but get mad when white people say you don’t belong in certain areas [laughing face emoji] just because you’re black doesn’t mean you gotta hate white people.” This tweet was in response to the argument that White people should not attend HBCUs. This retweet speaks to the experiences of Tatum, who argues the same regarding her race not being the reason to hate others who have overwhelmingly negatively impacted where we are as a nation regarding systemic injustice, racism, and inequity towards people of color.
Similarly, Tatum, in a podcast that she co-hosted and promoted on her Twitter, discussed how Blacks “get angry for whites for wanting to be dominant and not inclusive, but HBCUs are not inclusive.” Although Tatum’s lived experiences were centered in Black spaces such as her community and school, she can think about and speak on the allyship she has experienced and draws from that to defend in some way the treatment of those who are often at the cause of Black pain. Tatum understands the changes the Black community wants to see in terms of justice, antiracism, and equity but calls attention to perspectives grounded in disgust and resentment held by some individuals of the Black community, whose judgments may come off as not being just or equitable themselves. In the sub-theme that follows, How you get Seen in the Black Community is Completely Different, I present the unique experiences of Tatum, a Black pansexual who utilized literacy practices on social media to express the inequitable treatment of people of color in the LGBTQIA+ community. She also used social media literacies to advocate for people in the Black community to stand as allies and support people of color in the LGBTQIA+ community.

**How you get Seen in the Black Community is Completely Different.** In her second interview, Tatum discussed her experiences as a Black pansexual, and the different reactions Black individuals often get opposed to what she perceives that experience of others such as White members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Tatum expressed her feelings saying that,

The different experiences come in when the conversations are held and the way you are accepted and how you get viewed…I found that when I'm around my white friends and…other cultures of friends that are pansexual or any other sexual orientation, they're all really open, really accepting…usually the white people and different people of color that aren't Black [are welcoming]...the Black community - I've only had different
[negative] experiences with. Everybody else is super accepting, super nice; they get really excited when you tell them [about being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community].

Outside of the Black community, which was negative, I've only had positive experiences. How you get seen in the Black community is completely different.

Tatum expressed her positive experiences with people outside of the Black community and cautioned against automatically shunning all White individuals because of the race war occurring. Thus, she praises individuals she has relationships with outside of her race as often support systems for her and others in the LGBTQIA+community. The third central theme, *Necessary Conversations That Must Take Place Where Respect Goes a Long Way* of Tatum's case narrative, highlights her literacy practices on Instagram and Twitter, describing the importance of having hard but necessary conversations connected to race and how those literacies shaped her identity as someone who advocates for using your voice in challenging moments.

**Theme 3: Necessary Conversations That Must Take Place Where Respect Goes a Long Way**

In our first interview, Tatum expressed her desire to attend a liberal arts school or a predominately White institution (PWI), which was referenced in a podcast episode she was a guest on, and how she intends to be a voice for the Black community in those spaces. Tatum expressed the need for voices like hers in spaces that lack racial diversity. She said, "we would already be having conversations about...how do we change this and that...and probably have those conversations with white people... I'm gonna go to a school where I can be representative of the Black community." To summarize, Tatum went on to discuss how, as a kid, she was different from the majority of Black girls she knew, in that she was able to connect to those outside her culture, pointing to enjoying pop music and rock bands, but also how she related to
the Black culture such as R&B and rap, feeling like she fit in both communities. Tatum reflected on getting teased in middle school. Specifically, she was called "oreo" by peers who labeled her "white" on the inside and Black on the outside. In addition, Tatum wants to bridge the conversations in the Black community to White spaces, saying in our first interview, "I have gone in rooms where no one else can, and that's another reason why I cannot go to an HBCU. I can't have that experience because I need to be able to go in rooms, where I need to have conversations with different people that I wouldn't get to at an HBCU."

Adding to this recurring notion of the need for these critical conversations, Tatum advocates for Black communities such as her high school and family to have necessary conversations promoting support and respect of the LGBTQIA+ community and acknowledges the necessary race-centered conversations that need to happen in majority-White spaces with members of the community that is affected, which she aims to embrace herself. Tatum feels like she can be a part of those conversations because of her unique experiences in Black spaces as well as having the ability to speak in ways that connect with White female youth, saying, "when I went to high school, it was like every day, I was seeing different Black experiences to where it's like my moms like yeah this is the way life goes. She was like, this is what in a Black community happens, and so from freshman year on up, I had all of those experiences that I want to have from the Black community, so I felt like I could - I was always comfortable, and everyone room that I went in…", in our first interview. To Tatum, respect is the central aspect of having these necessary racial and sexual-oriented conversations with individuals.

To follow, I present three sub-themes, specifically, (a) The Angry Black Woman; (b) Making the Comfortable, Uncomfortable; and (c) RESPECT is Very Simple, all providing insight into the way Tatum employed literacies on Instagram and Twitter related to her racialized
experiences, which in return, impact her multiple layers of identity as a Black teen of color. The first sub-theme, *The Angry Black Woman*, speaks to an identity related to Tatum's race and gender intersections to counter a stereotypical representation she worked intentionally not to assume.

**The Angry Black Woman.** Tatum explained in our first interview how she does not want to be seen as the angry Black woman, saying specifically, "I have to act a certain way, because then, I know I can't be seen as angry Black woman. I was like ya'll don't get it because y'all are boys, and I can't be seen as a Black woman who starts drama and is angry," in response to dealing with a racial work experience at her local junior journalist program. She discussed how she feels that as a young, Black woman, she has to carry herself in a certain way that does not give off the stereotypical notion of an angry Black woman. In part, she said, "If I was to apply for a job and they accessed my social media, they are going to see my feelings, my liberal views and my opinions on how things should go, and that's how I want my job to see me as compared to the angry Black woman who's yelling about every single thing." Here, Tatum is conscious about how others perceive her, such as non-people of color in positions of authority or high positions of power.

In addition, Tatum discussed what she sees as strikes against her for being Black, a woman, and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, which causes her not to want to be perceived stereotypically. Tatum explained how she felt being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community impacts her advocacy efforts, saying, "it makes me more active. I feel like it pushes me to speak out more because trans people are bullied the most, and I feel like because I'm cisgender...it's easier for me to have these kinds of conversations because, um, people respect weirdly enough cisgender people more than trans people, so I just feel like I have that outlet, and
I have that platform, to speak on it." To summarize, Tatum explains that if someone is a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, you have one strike against you, but making the point that if you are also Black and a woman, you have other things against you, calling attention to the intersectionality of marginalized identities. Being the angry Black woman, a stereotypical assumption centered in race is something Tatum is making a conscious effort to not accept as part of her identity. Still, she is aware of how as a Black pansexual female, she is judged by not just her race but her sexual orientation as well. In the second sub-theme, *Making the Comfortable, Uncomfortable*, I provide an account of Tatum's advocacy for the racial justice of people of color; nevertheless, in doing so, I explain how Tatum's perspectives about the race-related social justice movement, Black Lives Matter, which offers a unique stance from a person of color. I also focus on Tatum's advocacy towards privileging a conversation focused on Black lives above any other conversation centered on race.

**Making the Comfortable, Uncomfortable.** In support of the racialized experiences of Black people, Tatum retweeted, “I have a Black father. A Black boyfriend. Black brothers. Black uncles. Black cousins. Black friends. Their lives matter.” Though she supports the movement towards anti-racism, equity, and justice for Blacks as a community, Tatum has a unique stance on the way the Black Lives Matter Movement and how they go about justice efforts. In our first interview, Tatum discussed her thoughts on the Black lives matter movement, saying, "I support them, to a certain degree. I like what they're trying to do, but do they always execute it the right way? I do know I don't support that all time. I don't support them protesting and looting...I don't support that because then the media will portray you in a certain way." In sum, Tatum references how people in the movement are trying to embody Martin Luther King, but really are acting more like Malcolm X, critiquing the *Black Lives Matter* movement for lack of organization;
however, she highlighted she supports the movement, just not how it gets carried out criticizing protesting, and instead of offering the alternative of going through government channel which I argue is a product of systemic racism. Expanding on this stance, in our third interview, she explained her dislike for protesting and expressed how although the Black Lives Matter movement is strong due to having more allies, being more widespread, respected, and expressed how she feels the movement has become somewhat of a trend. She said, "honestly, with a lot of people putting BLM in their bios and different stuff like that. I feel like some support is genuine, and you can tell when it's not...and [to me] like Black Lives Matter isn't a trend..." In this interview, Tatum highlights the counternarrative that all lives matter, and agrees but is quick to point out that, "right now we're talking about Black lives." Here, Tatum is making the comfortable, uncomfortable and doing so unapologetically.

Additionally, Tatum retweeted a tweet from Lebron James, which read, "I'm so damn tired of seeing Black people killed by the police. I took the tweet down because its being used to create more hate - This isn't about one officer. it's about the entire system and they always use our words to create more racism. I am so desperate for more ACCOUNTABILITY." Similarly, Tatum feels that requiring accountability from people is her purpose; however, she speaks about this regarding the LGBTQIA+community. In our second interview, she says, "I have a bunch of friends in the LGBTQIA+ community, and I'm like in GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance - student-led organization], so they know I'm actively open to supporting the community, which really you know, makes them upset, and I'm like I feel like if you if, I'm not making the comfortable uncomfortable with things that they need to be comfortable with I'm not doing my job." Though this community is at the center of Tatum’s activism and advocacy efforts, she is invested in bringing awareness to the Black lives lost at the hands of police. Tatum expressed her opinions
about the murder of George Floyd and the connection to police brutality, tweeted in support of the charges against his murderer, former police officer Derek Chavin, and expressed the need to have uncomfortable conversations. In support of uncomfortable but necessary actions, Tatum retweeted, “On Nickelodeon they have a “I can’t Breathe” commercial that shows how long is 9 mins. During this 9 mins you hear nothing just breathing” to show her appreciation of the actions this children network took in airing this commercial, which offers the potential to start conversations in homes that disrupt the comfortable. In the third sub-theme, RESPECT is Very Simple, I argue that Tatum used social media, specifically Twitter, to foster the need for people in society to adopt a sense of respect. She advocates for support and allyship through respect, not agreement with marginalized people's practices, perspectives, and lived decisions.

RESPECT is Very Simple. Tatum tweeted, "RESPECT TRANS PEOPLE. I'm sick of having this conversation over and over again. RESPECT is very simple. i get "opinions," but RESPECT is something that never changes [sparkle star emoji]. Here, Tatum is writing in support of the LGBTQIA+ community. She is writing in a way that is advocating for this community due to her experiences with her majority Black student body and her traditional Southern Baptist Black family, who she feels do not respect members of the community, specifically trans members. In doing so, Tatum embraces her role as an ally of the community and calls attention to inequity and injustice for this marginalized group of individuals. Adding to this, Tatum showed support by retweeting a post, which reads, "please stop speaking on the trans experience if you're not trans...you really don't know what they go through to just be opening your mouth and talking out the side of your neck." Continuing to express herself, she retweets a post about Trump passing a bill in healthcare that allows healthcare workers to deny care to anyone perceived as gay or trans. Here, Tatum is trying to communicate that trans people are
treated unjustly. Tatum seems to be creating an argument through her tweets that call for trans people to be respected in all areas, one being in sports. Tatum retweeted a post supporting the trans athletic community, which reads, in part, Trans athletes aren't the problem." Furthermore, she was looking for this notion of respect to spread from this global social platform to her local school and retweeted a post that sought to identify students and staff members in her school district who identified as transgender or have opinions about how their school addresses those who do to help report a story to a local news outlet. As Tatum demonstrates that respect is a simple character trait that goes a long way in marginalized communities, she lives by the words she tweets, “I’ve always been good to everyone. no matter what, i know that.” In sum, this narrative shows that Tatum used social media to bring people together and that she had allies from all groups of people. In the following section, I offer a description of Dakarai to emphasize who she is as a teen writer, advocate, french teacher, media arts student, and young person of color outside of her social media profiles, which in return, allow me to shape her personal and literacy experiences. Then, I described the three themes and sub-themes in her case narrative.

**Dakarai’s Historical and Contextual Description**

Using artifacts outside of social media, such as Dakarai’s writing, podcast episodes she was a guest on, a video of a virtual workshop presentation, and formal and informal conversations with her, I shape, in part, who she is in order to give history and context to her case narrative. As far as her writing, Dakarai writes for several local organizations, including newspaper and magazine youth journalism outlets and programs. In this section, I summarize some of the things she wrote about and include one example representing her the most. To provide an overview of Dakarai’s work, I summarize what is important to this participant and what she advocates for, not just on but off social media. For instance, Dakarai wrote about
gender-fluid fashion going mainstream, which was published in a youth-driven newspaper where Dakarai is a junior journalist. Though she wrote this article as part of her journalism program, Dakarai posted about it on her personal Instagram account, making it clear that Dakarai not only advocates for people of color but other marginalized communities such as the LGBTQIA+ community, and like in this piece, specifically people who are gender non-conforming or gender fluid. Adding to this, Dakarai wrote a review about a movie shown at a local French film festival for her junior journalism program and, like the one described above, posted about the piece on her personal Instagram, advocating for young people needing to watch the movie in school. In addition, Dakarai wrote a fiction story as a junior journalist, something rarely published in the news outlet. In this piece, she highlighted a Black youth protagonist and the culture of her local city. In sum, Dakarai is a connoisseur of fiction whose interests span from writing about music, entertainment, the arts, culture, LGBTQIA+ topics, and social justice. In addition to writing for her local journalism newspaper outlet, Dakarai wrote and published her stories and poetry on StoryBird, an online place to tell stories. As a lover of reading fiction and fantasy, Dakarai is currently writing fiction and fantasy stories and wants to publish the collection by 2022.

Outside of social media, Dakarai also writes with creative writing communities. For example, Dakarai participated in The Pandemic Diary, an eight-week creative writing workshop with the Tupac Shakur Foundation. The workshop served as a therapeutic community writing opportunity for Dakarai and other teens of color. The writing workshop's goal was to create literary documentation, such as a magazine or a Zine of pandemic experiences from teen writers' perspectives. Dakarai and other teens wrote stories that honored their history and culture and the truth of the pandemic experience in their eyes. The project included different formats of short-fiction, poetry, songs, and screenwriting and the result was a digital multimedia zine, where
excerpts of Dakarai’s contributions are below.

I've found a sense of duty as a young writer to document my thoughts and feelings about this pandemic, as this will surely be making history, and I will surely want to look back on my earlier writing to remember, I survived that...And what people don't understand is covid-19 is not the only pandemic the U.S. is suffering from. Racism, sexism, homophobia, among many others, are also pandemics staring this country in the face...My black experience, my experience as youth, my experience as a young woman of colour was more than feeling the effects of a physical virus. I experienced Kamala Harris, I experienced the protests, I experienced a lack of leadership on Trump's part, I experienced this constant need to do something. Because I know it matters, because I know others like me feel this. They, along with I, continue to feel this. I continue to experience, present tense evolution, change, depression, joy, surprise...If I know one thing about being black in this country, it's that if I'm not given happiness, I'll make my own happiness. I'll create my world the way I want it - livable, prosperous. After all, I'm a creator. I'll create my Books, I'll create positive change, I'll create my future.

Beyond writing, Dakarai's podcast contributions show part of her racialized experiences as a Black teen and reveal aspects of her identity. Dakarai was a guest on the youth journalism program's podcast, accompanying the local junior journalism newspaper outlet that published her writing. Dakarai spoke with other junior journalists about the misrepresentation of people of color in fictional media, specifically the fantasy genre, and discussed a lack of people of color and diversity in fantasy. She also discussed how it was not enough to have representation, such as one Black person in the background, saying, "you need to have sufficient representation; it shouldn't be a static character; they need to grow," referencing how decorative Black people are
just there to be there. Furthermore, Dakarai and the other teens were advocating for more people of color in the writer's room as writers are the ones who are writing these stories, books and have a lot to do with misrepresentation since White people behind the scenes are writing people of color. For example, Dakarai described how it is hard to create a character when you're not that character or have not been in that position. Dakarai also discussed strides being made towards accurate representation and diversity in the writers' room where people are creating these things, such as leading Black characters and protagonists in fantasy, books, movies, and tv shows. Thus, Dakarai seeks representation that provides an accurate understanding of life for people of color.

She also was a guest on an episode about Trump's presidency as it came to a close. In this episode, the teen hosts, including Dakarai, shared their hopes for the new administration, specifically the Biden and Harris administration. Dakarai spoke about how a good thing that came out of Trump's presidency was that "people have been more citizen active, more aware of what is going on in the world, more involved in politics because they see how much the stuff can affect their lives and the lives of other people, made people want to become activist, and just active in general and just wake up and think, especially 2020 people learned from it at least." She went on to discuss how the LGBTQIA+, Black/African American, and Latinx communities were the groups of people most threatened under his presidency, and how Trump reminds people of the past supremacist, pointing to how the three groups were threatened the most "because of how much hate towards those people was brought up." Further, she talked about what Make America Great Again means to her vs. what it meant to Trump, saying, "for Trump, it means let's bring it back to the old ways where everyone was not treated the same way. But Make America Great Again does not work for people who were oppressed and hurt by this country...so maybe instead of saying Make America Great Again, let's say Make America Great in the First Place." She
discussed how *Make America Great Again* represents slavery and genocide. Thus, podcasts served as another way for Dakarai to use her voice outside of writing to advocate for people of color and share her perspectives on the racialized experiences of Black people.

In sum, Dakarai is a Black creator on a mission to highlight diversity such as race, sex, and gender, disabilities, languages, and youth leadership through her multimodal composing. She creates and tells stories in any way she can, whether through writing, dance, or videos. Explaining who she is, Dakarai wrote, "I create and tell stories through my writing and music...I believe that someone can't create without exploring...I support the promotion of other creators, especially creators of color and creators who need a platform to share their art. I hope in the world that all kids and adults everywhere won't ever be oppressed for parts of their identity and create freely on their own."

**Case Narrative**

This section highlights Dakarai’s thematic case narrative, specifically how she enacted literacy practices on social media related to her racialized experiences, and describes how those literacies shape her identity. Specifically, I describe three main themes, (a) *Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard*, and the sub-themes, (b) *Creating Change as a Content Creator*, and (c) *Why Wait to be a Grown-up to Change the World?*, and the sub-themes for each to provide a narrative of how Dakarai engaged in literacy practices on Instagram and YouTube related to her experiences as a Black teen of color and how her literacy practices shaped her identity as a Black, female artist, teen writer, media arts student, and self-proclaimed #FictionNerd.
Theme 1: Black Youth Take on Systemic Racism

The racialized experiences of people of color, specifically Black youth, are grounded in the systemic racism ingrained in the United States society. Dakarai highlighted White privilege, which impacts the experiences of people of color. For example, Dakarai posted a repost on her personal Instagram account story that reads, "White privilege is the ability to pass laws that prevent everyone from learning history that makes white people feel uncomfortable." This post was about many states' decisions to ban critical race theory from being taught in schools. Additionally, Dakarai reposted a post from Trevor Noah's The Daily Show, which reads, "Happy Juneteenth! The first U.S. holiday that's illegal to teach about in 15 states." On her personal Instagram account, Dakarai posts content about race often. For example, she posted about CRT [Critical Race Theory] being banned from schools in some states. Also, she reposts content saying we need to talk about race, pointing to the fact that since Black children are old enough to experience racism, other children should be old enough to learn about racism and content on being anti-racist. In addition, Dakarai reposts about political figures who do not want schools to teach CRT, where she added her commentary, which reads, "They...confidently say this (face emoji with eyes big) that's a darn shame." Adding to her perspectives, Dakarai reposted the text, "Banning Critical Race Theory from schools is a step backwards from racial progress," on her personal Instagram account.

Additionally, Dakarai called attention to Black and Indigenous people's experiences, the history of the U.S., and its roots in systemic racism. For example, on her author account, Dakarai reposted a cartoon-like, graphic novel style post that shows an Indigenous person and an African person that reads, "Hey America! You're on stolen land...Built up by Africans." The caption reads in full, "In 1776, colonizers began to celebrate THEIR independence on stolen land and
used African people to build up THEIR country… This was the birth of systemic racism in America… How could July 4th be a celebration of FREEDOM?" Adding to Dakarai's perspectives that criticize the holiday, Dakarai reposted a post about how "independence day did not free everyone" and continued, "celebrating July 4th is celebrating white supremacy." The post also highlighted how the 4th represents "the freeing of cis, white, rich men and is about white lives, white freedom, and white supremacy." Other posts with the same topic was posted on Dakarai's Instagram stories for her personal account such as, "America was not discovered. America was stolen." Another post read, "all (white) (rich) men are created equal." However, calling attention to injustice is not enough for Dakarai, as she is ready to take it on, bringing youth of color with her.

Dakarai's actions show she is ready to take on system injustice as she draws on the racialized experiences of Black people. For example, on her personal Instagram account, Dakarai posted about the importance of Black lives. For example, she reposted a post that reads, "Black lives, dreams, futures matter" in a colorful mural style post. In another post, she reposted a message in black and white that read, "Black Power is neither racist nor is it the hatred of others. It is a spiritual way of life promoting self love, determination and the well-being of our people. We must never allow anyone to discourage this." Thus, Dakarai is up for the fight. In the section below, I discussed the first sub-theme centered on representation to speak to the desire of Dakarai to feel seen and heard. To do so, I referenced how she used social media literacies in response to her race-infused experiences, paying particular attention to how those literacies shaped her layered identities.

My Representation Matters. Dakarai uploaded a 51-second video titled Black Youth Matter to her Youtube Channel, featuring her and other youth of color. In the video, Dakarai said
the line, "My representation matters," and she also edited the video, gave directions to teens, wrote the "script," and uploaded it to her YouTube Channel. At the end of the video, the following text appeared on the screen, "Black Youth Matter Today Tomorrow and the Days that Follow," followed by "Amplify, Celebrate and Empower the Voices of Black Youth, Invest In Our Education, Lives & Future." In the description box, Dakarai wrote, "Black Youth Will Always Matter." A transcript of the video is below, where a different teen read each line:

*My mental health matters*
*My representation matters*
*My music matters*
*My joy matters*
*My art matters*
*My future matters*

Dakarai advocates for the representation of people of color in books, T.V., film, and in every facet of society; she also goes beyond race and advocates for representation across sexuality and disability, as well as intersectionality representation. In the next paragraph, I present the second sub-theme, *Gen Z is Ready*, to further conceptualize how Dakarai wants to be at the front and center of change and action-oriented work. This sub-theme presents Dakarai's goal to be noticed and how she, in return, calls on her entire generation to join her in the cause. Here, I focused on how race and race-related issues impacted her social media practices and, in part, shaped her multi-dynamic identities.

**Gen Z is Ready.** On her personal Instagram account, Dakarai posted the following message on her feed, joining other youth doing the same, which read,

If you didn't know: This user wants to dismantle systemic racism. As a Gen Z kid...Yes, I'm listening. Yes, I'm paying attention. I'm analyzing. Even as a kid, I'm tired of hearing about racism on the tv everyday. Things I have to deal with as a kid/teen in 2021: 1. Systemic racism and the trauma that comes with it. 2. Struggling to find
motivational/resources to understand school work. 3. Actress, Anxiety, and Depression for various reasons, 4. Being stuck at home way too often. If you didn't know: Gen Z is ready to change the world for the better. If you didn't know: Black dreams, mental health, joy, art, and lives matter. You would think that by now, people would have learned; after all, it's twenty twenty one. But here I am, heart aching because for some strange reason, our work here isn't done. Don't you dare tell me I'm too young to understand, I regularly utilize both my ears and my brain and trust me, I'm old enough to know that systemic racism in America, is traumatic and insane.

She hashtagged #speak out, #systemicracism, #blackyouthpower, #blackexcellence, #blackyouth, #BLM, #blackwriting, #blackgirlmagic, and #genziswatching. Dakarai, along with her fellow Gen Z peers, is confronting systemic racism and the trauma that comes with it, making it clear that just because they are young does not mean they do not understand what is happening; it is quite the opposite, as Dakarai and other youth are activists for change. In the following section, I illustrate how the third sub-theme, *I am my Ancestor's Wildest Dreams*, represents Dakarai's activism as a person of color by showcasing how social media content was inspired by the racialized experiences of others, just as much as her own. This sub-theme offers a look into how Dakarai's outlet for expression, social media, became the sounding board for anti-hate, anti-racism, and anti-Blackness.

**I am my Ancestor's Wildest Dreams.** On her Instagram feed for her personal account, Dakarai posted her poem, *Quarters Amongst Dimes*, where she spoke to the racialized experiences of Blacks, and her perspectives regarding systemic racism, and police brutality. In her caption, she wrote, 'I'm so tired, I'm so angry, and so disappointed. So I wrote a poem! (I suck at poetry but the message is important [large eye emoji]). I am my ancestors' wildest
dreams.” She also hashtagged, #GenZIsWatching, #BLM, #BlackWriting #blackgirlmagic, #blackyouth, #blackexcellence, #blackbeauty, #blackentrepreneurs, #blackhistoryinthemaking, #shareblackstories, #blackchangemakers, #blackyouthvisionaries, #blackyouthpower #flexininmycomplexion #SystemicRacism, #SpeakOut. The poem, which speaks to wanting to be heard and Dakarai's identity as a Black teen, is below.

Quarters Amongst Dimes

I'm terribly exhausted and this is definitely not the first time.
That a Person in Blue has committed a devastating crime.
This is most definitely a daunting and arduous hill we climb.
When it comes to black people, they think they're quarters amongst dimes.
I haven't been on this earth very long: How many years you ask? Well, just sixteen.
And yet nearly everyday I see someone like me get disrespected, shot, and killed on screen.
Day in and day out, there's this cycle of ignorance and hate-- it disgusts me, makes me turn green.

It still strikes me hard and odd. It vexes me, when The People In Blue insist their hands are clean.
Please don't come to me again about the bad apples; that can't be the case when the whole tree is rotten!
The deepest roots of the police force were built upon the Slave Patrol, or have you somehow forgotten?
It's like The People in Blue have this one track mind, that, by default, goes "I see a threat, it's skin so black!"
Any and all sense jumps out the window. Their hands twitch for their gun, their brain says "It's time to attack!"
"I was afraid for my life!" They always seem to say. So I bellow in return, "Stop spouting those lies!"
Are your papas, and sisters, and brothers, and mamas the ones uttering wails, grief-filled cries?
Are your little sons, and daughters, and nieces, and nephews the ones afraid to sleep and close their eyes?
Are your people the ones who buy skittles from the store, comply peacefully--only to get shot and die?
You would think that by now, people would have learned; after all, it's twenty twenty one.
But here I am, heart aching, because for some strange reason, our work here isn't done.
Don't you dare tell me I'm too young to understand, I regularly utilize both my ears and my brain
And trust me, I'm old enough to know that systemic racism in America, is traumatic and insane.

The writing above symbolizes how far Black people have come and represents the life that Black people’s ancestors dreamed about, one where there is more freedom available to ancestors, and
the opportunities for Blacks, which unfortunately existed only in their wildest dreams. Thus, this sub-theme highlights the progression of Black people of color in their fight for a more just society, in this case, Black teens like Dakari tying to the overall theme, *Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard* and relating to the research questions, by showing literacy in direct relation to racialized experiences.

**Theme 2: Creating Change as a Content Creator**

Dakarai creates videos, whether for challenges, competition, or just a way to express her creativity or to put out information about things that matter to her. As a Black content creator, she turns to outlets that allow her to use her voice, and video creating is one of those outlets. Thus, Dakarai is creating change as a content creator for people of color through her activism. At times, Dakarai creates videos to reflect on her experiences. For example, Dakarai made a YouTube video to express her perspectives on how her school delivered on the promises of equal access and educational excellence during her time of learning that was disrupted by COVID. She explained her education story in the format of a poem, an excerpt of the transcript is below:

#MyEducationStory

*It was definitely an odd experience learning from at home- at a distance
It called for different communication and some much needed assistance
At first I didn't know how classes would be structured, taught and arranged
All I knew was that a variety of things were bound to shift and change
  My school gave us the resources we needed.
  Putting us in every position to succeed and-
  In our life the school planted some seeds.
  Fulfilling so many of our academic needs.
*Online meets weren't just a feeding of facts and information
  We engaged in casual and fun yet necessary conversation
  Making not only school work, but life in general
  Less hectic for the student population.
*Because equal access doesn't just include coursework and lessons
  Which my school has communicated through their own actions
  The sum of these aids resources and tools are what I'd call
  Educational excellence and access for all*
This abbreviated content further illustrates how Dakarai uses social media, such as YouTube, to create change, embodying her identity as a content creator for social justice. Here, she reflects on her school experiences as a young person of color during a global pandemic. To follow, I present three sub-themes, namely, (a) **BIPOC Mental Health Activism**; (b) **#DanceActivism**; and (c) **Lights, Camera, ACTION** that further describes theme two, **Creating Change as a Content Creator**, emphasizing the way Dakarai engaged with literacies on YouTube and Instagram to foster a culture of change, cultivate content related to activism, and creatively express herself as a teen of color who is not going to be complicit with the ways things are on a systemic level. In the first sub-theme, I showcase how Instagram becomes a platform for teens who identify as an activist, such as Dakaria, who enacted literacies grounded in racial and diversity, equity, and inclusion issues that she advocated for, such as the mental health of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color.

**BIPOC Mental Health Activism.** Dakarai and her peer were finalists for a video for change competition where they made a video about the mental health of people of color youth where they focused on the importance of being aware of the challenges people of color youth face and the importance of providing support. Dakarai posted the video on her Instagram. In the video, Dakarai and her peer, who is also a person of color, specifically Asian, portrayed racialized experiences of Black and Asian teens in school and encouraged viewers to commit to making BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] feel safe and loved. They also called for people to create more inclusive and empathetic spaces for BIPOC individuals and provide resources geared toward mental health. In her caption on Instagram, Dakarai said, “I am so happy and excited to announce that [friend social media account], and I ARE FINALIST IN
THE US VIDEOS FOR CHANGE COMPETITION. [Friend name] and I decided to create our video on the mental health of youth of color.” She explained the need for the video, saying,

All youth in the US have problems to deal with...However, children of color in particular constantly feel the need to perform twice as good as opposed to their white peers…On top of that, bullying, microaggressions, and stereotypes all play a role in the daily mental health of youth of colour. It can spark self hate, which can later lead to self harm…We want youth of colour to know that their voices and concerns are being heard, that they are loved, and that they’re mental health matters, even if it doesn’t always feel this way.

Dakarai then asks people online to "help us win the Videos for Change People's Choice Award by voting for our video!" and hashtags, #VideosforChange, #Youngchangemaker, #Finalists, and #US Competition. Dakarai closed the caption for this Instagram post by asking for support, encouraging followers to spread their video's message, vote for and share their video. In sum, Dakarai shows how active she is in informing others about the issues youth of color experience. She wants youth of color voices and concerns to be heard and thinks that youth of color are dealing with specific problems associated with their racialized experiences and identities. In the second sub-theme, #DanceActivism, I focused on how Dakarai’s literacies online transitioned to action, particularly dance activism, an artistic way to tie a multimodal video on Instagram and YouTube to her advocacy efforts in the liberation of Black people.

#DanceActivism. Dakarai uses dance to show her advocacy for the importance of Black lives. On Instagram, Dakarai posted a screenshot of her dancing entry on the XQ Rethink Together Challenge to her personal Instagram feed. She included the caption, "voting is live, link in bio if you like my nonsense. Votes greatly appreciated of course” [side eye emoji]" and included the hashtags, #XQMistyChallenge #16yearold #DanceActivism #vote
#blackyouthpower #dance #blackexcellence #blackartist. Also, Dakarai added the video clip to her YouTube channel, sharing her content across platforms. The 40-second video was in part, titled #XQistyChallenge. In addition, Dakarai posted her dance video clip on her Instagram stories on her author and her personal account along with information on how to vote for her video, how many votes she currently has, the video submission title, "Black excellence," and her request for her followers to vote for her. Dakarai's video was also featured on the competition's website with the caption she provided, "This dance was created as a form of limitless expression, particular because I possess no professional training in dance. It's to serve as a reminder to all not to think too hard about how good someone else is or seems." In sum, this dance challenge represents her use of art as a form of activism as a Brown teen who uses her dance moves to do the work her voice usually does, relating to her racialized experiences and identity work as a Black creator and composer. In the following paragraph, I emphasize the role sub-theme three, Lights, Camera, ACTION, plays in understanding how literacies on social media cultivated opportunities for Dakarai to grapple with her and other people of color race-based experiences and perspectives, which directly related to her who she is and her day to day affairs.

**Lights, Camera, ACTION.** Dakarai created videos and uploaded them to YouTube in response to questions on the *E Pluribus Unum* website, which invited teens to "choose a question, record a video." Specifically, in one video, Dakarai advised Southern communities that desired to advocate for racial equity but had different opinions in carrying the goal out. In her response video, she talked about the importance of knowing "the difference between equality and equity, the importance of listening to each other, the need for a diverse group of people talking, including those that are marginalized and people it may not directly impact to discuss issues as a whole, as a community." In another video, responding to a different prompt, she spoke about
going to school with kids from other backgrounds and how her school experience impacts her views on race in another YouTube video. Here, Dakarai highlighted how her experiences in an international school helped her learn about other people's cultures, backgrounds, and what they go through, and how to be respectful about it. She remarked, "Not always agreeing or liking what someone else does is okay, but not being unnecessarily mean." Dakarai explained how she hopes people acknowledge and respect others and their identity.

Further, she explained how her upbringing and exposure to diversity, economically, racially, and language, such as French, Chinese, Spanish, English made it normal to see people who looked, spoke, ate, and acted differently, contributing to her inclusive nature. Her two schools impacted how she embraced different cultures due to learning about them through classroom lessons, books, and reading. While educating others, Dakarai used her racialized experiences and channeled them into the content she submitted as a video creator. As a student in a diverse population, her identity helped her express her unique perspectives while responding to the two prompts, creating content that brings attention to what is needed to make progress towards being an antiracist. To follow, I present the third main theme, Why Wait to be a Grown-up to Change the World?, in Dakarai’s narrative to provide an overview of how she is interested in using social media literacies right now, as a teen, to enact change, avoiding the cliche of waiting to be an official adult to do so.

**Theme 3: Why Wait to be a Grown-up to Change the World?**

Dakarai’s experiences as a Black female teen drives how passionate she is about the need for spaces that help amplify Black voices. She holds a desire to create that space wherever she sees opportunities to do so, not only for herself but also for others. Further, Dakarai’s identity as a Black female youth comes alive in online spaces. For example, Dakarai reposted a post to the
stories of her Instagram personal account, which reads, "Dear black girls you are all worthy. Your melanin skin is radiant. Your hairstyles are iconic. Never forget that. #ProtectBlckGirlsAtAllCost." Dakarai constantly posts positive accounts and representations of what it means to a Black girl. She also celebrates her identity, writing, "Black girl magic, Yall can't stand it, Yall can't ban it, Come out like a bandit," which are lyrics to a song titled Django Jane, a song by the music artist Janelle Monae. Aside from showing appreciation of who she is, Dakarai sheds light on who other youth of color are, independently and collectively, as a community of people.

Even though Dakarai has many platforms to showcase her voice and talents, such as podcasts, newspaper and magazine outlets, her three Instagram profiles, and her YouTube channel, she takes advantage of these platforms making sure to highlight her voice. For example, on her feed for her personal Instagram account, Dakarai posted about her first piece of fiction, *Cherry Blossoms*, telling about being published in a magazine, and hashtags, #teenwriter, #creator, #published, #geauxGirl, #femalewriters. The following is an excerpt of her piece.

*Cherry Blossoms*

*There are pink cherry blossoms embedded in my cornrows and captive to the bottom of my sneakers. In fact, they were littered everywhere on the desolate street. It seems that they rained from the milky white sky.*

*I wish they were real.*

*I wish I could slide my hand over a pile of cherry blossoms and rub at least one fine petal in between my small fingers.*

*I wish I could smell their sweet and seemingly delicate fragrance. Ha, delicate fragrance. What does that even mean?*

*But I cannot, they are sheer make believe, figments of my wild imagination. The dreary truth, the whole truth, is that they aren’t pink cherry blossoms. They don’t smell of honey like I formulated in my head, and they surely didn’t drop from the milky white sky. They didn’t drop from anything, because they weren’t real. They aren’t real. The scene before me blurs together in the shape of a spiral, in a messy amalgamation-- until every subject of my view melts into a stark jet black.*

*A pause. The black stands still.*

*The black drips from the edges of my vision like wet paint.*
This piece offers a significant picture of a Black female teen writer living out her dreams now; as a published writer, she solidified her identity as a changemaker of today, despite her age. Though she highlights her talents through writing, Dakarai also seeks to increase the number of youth of color voices heard by others worldwide. On Dakarai’s Instagram feed for her personal account, she spoke to the importance of allowing youth to use their voices to talk about the present, what they can do now, rather than in some distant future, saying the following, "Doesn't it make more sense for teachers and adults to ask us, "What do you want to do with your life? What are your goals, aspirations, and dreams?" Instead of "What do you want to be when you grow up?" She went on to say, "BOLD OF THEM TO ASSUME I WANT TO WAIT UNTIL I'M OLDER TO DO WHAT I LOVE." Here, Dakarai makes it known that youth can act now; they already have talents worth exploring and a voice worth hearing now, representing the premise of this theme.

To follow, I present three sub-themes, specifically, (a) Showcasing Young Black Creators and Entrepreneurs’ Talents, (b) Defend Youth Voices, and (c) Celebrating Black Voices the Right way, all providing insight how Dakarai utilized social media literacies related to her racialized experiences. The first sub-theme, Showcasing Young Black Creators and Entrepreneurs’ Talents, articulates the demands of Dakarai that centered on advocating for the acknowledgment of Black creators in predominantly White spaces who often do not get the credit they deserve.

**Showcasing Young Black Creators and Entrepreneurs’ Talents.** Dakarai reposted a post that reads, “Society: Why are black people mad at TikTok? This is the best way we can explain it to you: [two brown finger emojis pointed down].” Below that is a picture of the Bring It On movie cheer team, The Clover, the all-Black cheer team who had all original cheers stolen from the head cheerleader of the Torro’s cheer team, an all White cheer team in the movie. The caption reads, “because when black people create dances/trends they don’t get credit or get to
blow out yet non black users go viral and secure many opportunities for dances that aren’t even theirs. This is why we need our own black owned platforms (face emoji with straight mouth line) they always doing us dirty.” The hashtags included were #blackwriter, #blackexcellence, #blackculture, #blackqueens, #blackwomenrock, #darkskinwomen, #blackgirlskillingit. Here, Black creators’ work gets buried once White mainstream content creators mask them. However, Dakarai is an advocate for sharing the work of Black creators, and this speaks to how Blacks are often not given the credit they deserve once White people become the face of their work. She is interested in highlighting all the great things Black youth are doing.

In our first interview, she mentioned that when she Google's great things teens are doing, she sees mostly White youth doing positive things. She also discussed how she is not reading things about Black people in school, and when she does, it is about slavery. Instead, she is reading about White kids, particularly White males. Therefore, Dakarai was inspired to show positive things Black youth are doing and made an Instagram account solely to showcase young Black creators and entrepreneurs. Moving forward, she intends to start a podcast, but until then, she is using Instagram to promote the podcast. Dakarai used her existing Instagram profiles to highlight this new profile. Dakarai, on her personal Instagram account feed, posted an announcement about her third Instagram profile, geared toward her podcast, saying, "If yall didn't know already, I'm starting up a podcast that showcases the feedback, art, creations, and achievements of young black creators and entrepreneurs." In another feed post, this time on her author's Instagram account, Dakarai advertised the new podcast Instagram account, saying, "I decided to start a podcast celebrating and showcasing the talents, achievements, and generally amazing things black people (particularly black YOUTH have been doing). So please, go check out the official page that will be highlighting amazing black youth all month long. And it doesn't
just stop there --black history month is EVERY month...” Dakarai highlights your everyday teens of color and famous people of color on this account created to bring awareness to Black creators and entrepreneurs. This speaks directly to using social media to highlight the positive experiences of people of color. For example, Dakarai reposted a congratulatory post on her author account about Jamie Foxx making history as the first Black lead in a Pixar film, the first to win a Golden Globe and Oscar Awards. On this Instagram account, Dakarai also reposted about Black leads who won Oscar awards for a live-action short film, makeup and hairstyling, and best costume design. She also highlighted trans youth advocates of color, Black youth authors, Black youth artists, Black youth advocates, Black junior journalists, and Black youth entrepreneurs and CEOs. Doing so, Dakarai celebrated various generations of Blackness, the accomplishments and success of Black people, Black joy, and happiness, and not just the negative racialized experiences and trauma faced by people of color, specifically Blacks, on her Instagram, foregrounding racialized experiences and layers of identity work. The following section hones in on the second sub-theme, Defend Youth Voices, to capture Dakarai's advocacy efforts to amplify the voices, experiences, perspectives, and identities of people of color.

Defend Youth Voices. Since Dakarai is a member of the junior journalism organization, on her personal account’s Instagram stories, she reposted content from the organization that asked for donations and encouraged people to "defend youth voices.” The post highlighted the organization's purpose of addressing the lack of diversity and the few opportunities in journalism for youth of color. The post also called attention to literacy issues among local high schoolers that the organization helps address. They are committed to amplifying youth voices, something that is also important to Dakarai. She used her Instagram to encourage people by reposting, "Support BIPOC journalists. BIPOC [Black Indigenous People of Color] journalists with
decision-making power will make a big difference. Together we can widen the lens of journalism by providing opportunities to underrepresented writers to shape news coverage." Also, she reposted "Support equitable media" and "Support youth media makers," showing that Dakarai is part of an organization making efforts to be inclusive. Hence, Dakarai identifies as a writer, and this is evident on her social media platforms. For example, her profile bio for her author Instagram account includes two flags, a French flag and the USA flag, to represent her culture, with the text, "I am an aspiring teenage author currently working on fiction books that showcase diversity and youth leadership. #FictionNerd. (16 years old)." Dakarai used her platform to write and communicate her views about injustice, racism, and inequities among people of color on social media, specifically on her personal Instagram account. She also wrote to communicate her identity as a writer, reader, and Black teen in the US, and uplift other teens of color and make people aware of all the greatness within Black young people. Additionally, Dakarai posted a lot about police brutality, the need for police reform, Black deaths at the hands of police, specifically Daunte Wright and George Floyd, Black Lives Matter support, and content centered on injustice happening in the Black community. Outside of Instagram and YouTube, Dakarai writes for a local newspaper and virtual magazine. Thus, she uses her voice on and off social media in ways that address (anti)racism, justice-oriented, and equity-driven content, privileging the racialized day-to-day experiences of people of color. In the following paragraph, I present the last sub-theme, Celebrating Black Voices the Right way, which offers positive depictions of race-related experiences of people in the Black community.

**Celebrating Black Voices the Right way.** Dakarai reposted a meme on the stories of her personal Instagram account that reads, "streaming services be like, celebrating Black voices [red heart emoji]." The post included four pictures of scenes from Black movies, however, all the
movies were of the trauma of Black experiences, and none showed Black joy, something Dakarai has posted about previously on Instagram. She is a champion of telling Black stories without focusing on their pain and trauma but highlighting their happiness, providing a different perspective of the lived experiences of people of color. For example, Dakarai posted a repost from her personal Instagram account that spoke to the need to see Black people's lives in a positive light. Specifically, it read, "We need to see more black love WITHOUT struggle, more black films WITHOUT trauma, more black music without drugs, more black people in positions of power, more POSITIVE black history taught in schools and more importantly more black UNITY because we be our own enemies sometimes [black clapping hand emoji]." Here, Dakarai calls for society, including the Black community, to highlight Black positivity and excellence. In addition, Dakarai posted a repost to her personal Instagram account stories that depicted Black people embracing happiness. The text read, "Celebrate Black Joy." Similarly here, Dakarai finds importance in portraying the joy and not just the hardships in the lived experiences of Black people. Highlighting Black joy herself, Dakarai posted about Zaila Avant-garde, the winner of the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee and the first Black champion of the bee on the stories of her author and personal Instagram account. In sum, this theme represents how Dakarai, a teen of color, decided to celebrate Black voices right now, speaking to the overall theme, Why Wait to be a Grown-up to Change the World? It also represents how she engaged in literacies on Instagram to promote the positive experiences of Black people. Below, I offer a contextual description of the following case, Samirah X, and her narrative is to follow.

**Samirah X's Historical and Contextual Description**

Using artifacts off of social media, such as Samirah X's writing, observations of her performance for a virtual Black festival, an observation of a live webinar virtual panel discussion
she was a panelist among other actors and actresses, and her acting website, I intend to shape, in part, who she is to give history and context to her case narrative. Her Instagram showed evidence of the importance of her acting experiences and her racialized experiences as a Black teen actress. She also had a Twitter and TikTok account, to which she posted race-related content as well. In addition, her Facebook, now Meta account, which is not a social media platform that is a part of the data collection, was run by her mother and used to promote her upcoming acting projects and secure bookings. The following section showcases two examples of her identity, one of her as a screenwriter of scripts and the second as a teen actor who memorizes scripts to perform. Samirah X wrote scripts, some of which she turned into short films. The following is an excerpt from a script titled *You Change*, which she wrote during the summer of 2020, the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, particularly right after the death of George Floyd, amid the protests, riots, and police brutality cases brought to national attention, all of which she described as the inspiration for the script. In her script, Samirah X incorporated how racism is present in people's interactions during daily experiences, such as visiting the post office. Samirah X was only willing to share one scene and sent me the post office scene, her favorite part of the script, which she referenced in our first interview saying, “the script is centered on a real-life event during the aftermath of George Floyd, [including] the killing, the racism, the protests, the looting, and the civil unrest.” An excerpt of that scene, illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3, is highlighted below in the form of Samirah X's actual script.
Figure 1. Excerpt 1 of Scene 3, You Change

SCENE 3 EXT. POST OFFICE- SIDEWALK- DAYTIME

Issac turns to the group

ISSAC

Look at him, that's not his car, and I bet he stole all those shoes just like the rest of them, but he's not gonna get away with it this time.

ISSAC (TURNS TO THE WHITE FEMALE)

Call 911.

Issac pulls out his cell phone, begins recording the license plate of the car and also begins to video tape the driver as he is unloading his trunk.

The white female is turned to the side calling 911.
Additional, Samarah X memorized lines from scripts written by others; for example, Samarah X rehearsed the lines below until she memorized them for a recorded monologue presentation played virtually at a live event, a Black Beauty Festival where the theme was joy & magic. The
festival was a free two-day virtual event by a local theater. Samirah X participated in the festival and was part of the event called, *The Black Monologues*, where Black actors and actresses performed monologues that captured the Black experience through generations, from the 1950s through today. The stories, in part, represented the Black history of the city, the city's landmarks and reflected the time period. Samirah X's monologue presentation was her as the character "Lacey," set in 1993. An excerpt from the monologue performed virtually by Samirah X is below.

*Dear Diary,*

*Back home in Atlanta now. Mama's been acting weird ever since she picked me up from the airport. She's been so...nice? "I missed you, sugar pie!" "I made your favorite, burgers and fries just like they do at Mickie D's!" Cause we still ain't got no McDonald's money. I guess she feels bad about sending me off to stay with my Great Aunt Vi in Chicago for the summer. Truth is, I wanted her to feel bad...at first. Said I needed a change of scenery. That I needed to learn some discipline. Blah blah blah. This was my first time in Chicago so I didn't know much. Only that it gets really cold...It was the first time I'd seen a beach. The only water we got in Atlanta is Lake Lanier and everybody knows that place is cursed and for white people. I didn't do or say much the first few days. I was hurt. I missed home, I missed my friends, I even missed my mama though she was the reason I had to leave. I don't think I'm bad. I get good grades in school, I do my chores...But sometimes I like to explore. I like seeing new things. I don't like feeling stuck in one place. So I wander, but not too far. To a park or the mall after school. Just to see new things, new people. Aunt Vi says I remind her of when she was younger and left the south. "It's your birthright to spread your wings, sugar pie. Just do it when the time is right. You ain't gotta rush to grow up." Grownups always say that. But she promised to give me my space as long as I committed to doing something constructive for an hour each day. "You always writing something in that notebook so write a story everyday." This summer was going to be lame, I just knew it. But with every new place I saw, I had something to write down.

In our first interview, Samirah X explained how easy it was for her to learn lines, such as those for this monologue, saying, "um it took me, I will say like a couple of days, like two days. I'm kind of like use like memorizing stuff now. So, like it just comes like really fast to me now that I've done practice memorizing lines so much." Supporting her identity as a teen actress, Samirah X takes the job of learning her lines seriously.
Aside from writing and memorizing scripts, I observed Samirah X, a featured panelist for a presentation among several noted professionals, and a famous actor, Harry Lennix. Samirah X and the panelist shared first-hand experiences and perspectives of pursuing and maintaining a career in the arts. As a panelist for the webinar on professions in the arts, Samirah X brought a different perspective to the virtual panel discussion as the only teen actress on the panel, contributing to the panel by discussing her creative style and inspiration, saying, "it just comes from my environment. During the pandemic last year, with all the riots and George Floyd's death, that really inspired me to write my film You Change...I just feel like I'm the kind of person that if I see stuff that inspires me or makes me like want to be creative, I just write about it."

Speaking to her identity, Samirah X began acting at nine and is a screenwriter, actress, producer, and emerging filmmaker who has been cast in leading and supporting roles in independent films and short films. Hence, she took acting very seriously and enrolled in classes at a local community college such as Introduction to Filmmaking, where she studied directors, and Screenwriting, where she learned basic screenwriting skills like formatting, developing characters, and their motives.

Adding to her acting, screenwriting, and directing experiences, Samirah X is also working on her first short film, Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, which she co-wrote and produced, played the leading role of Angela Worthy and recently debuted at Black film festivals. Samirah X also promoted the film on Instagram and YouTube. On the panel discussed above, she discussed how important it is to deal with rejection in the acting field and how it made her stronger. She also discussed how she maintains her social life and protects her image. In addition, in the webinar, Samirah X discusses how social media has impacted her acting; explicitly saying, "I just feel like you know, showing yourself, being yourself, and just being
active, and promoting yourself that's what it's really all about, because like, I'll get DM's on Instagram, asking to be a part of somebody's project, because I post myself, or I show what I look like, I post little clips of me doing other shows, so I just feel like it's really all about just branding yourself." In sum, describing who she is on her website, Samirah X said in part, "I believe making movies is magical. After spending lots of time in community theater and on my very first movie set, I became inspired to create and tell stories. I'm motivated to push myself to come up with great ideas and help bring them to life on camera." To do so, Samirah X intends to take more acting classes, continue to volunteer on film sets as a production assistant, and audition for roles, solidifying her identity as an actress and screenwriter.

**Case Narrative**

This section highlights Samirah X’s thematic case narrative, specifically how she enacted literacy practices on social media related to her racialized experiences and describes how those literacies shape her identity. Here, I describe the first central theme, #MyBlackIsBeautiful, and its sub-themes, (a) #bgva: Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, (b) A Brown-skinned Girl’s Self-worth, and (c) #Bookme to offer a depiction of Samirah X’s online literacy practices and the intersections of race.

**Theme 1: #MyBlackIsBeautiful**

In her writing, Samirah X speaks to the racialized experiences that she has endured personally, such as being passed for specific roles over what she felt were Black girls who were more appealing, such as having lighter or may pass as mixed, exotic or, as she says in her script for her new project, ambiguous. Whether Samirah X is drawing from her own experiences or the experiences of others in the Black community, she addresses how race is a factor. To Samirah X, being Black was not always something she celebrated, and now, she has come full circle,
admiring her beauty as a brown-skinned Black girl. For example, Samirah X's Instagram and TikTok are now filled with pictures of herself, such as selfies and videos of herself embracing who she is, beautiful brown skin, and all.

Outside of her writing and acting, Samirah X was interested in cosmetology and was a beauty student. She went to a cosmetology camp for two summers, where she learned how to shampoo, condition, and properly detangle hair. Samirah X also learned how to use heat on hair and how to braid hair. Part of her identity is centered on her love for styling hair, specifically Black hair, representative of the hashtag she frequently uses, #MyBlackIsBeautiful. In the section that follows, I present the sub-theme, #bgva: Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, to show Samirah X’s racialized experiences as a young actor of color who navigated societal representations of beauty and showcased how she eventually came to see herself as beautiful through writing, acting, and producing a Black project, as it relates to her racialized and literacy identity.

#bgva: Black Girls vs. Ambiguous. Black Girls vs. Ambiguous is Samirah X's newest film that she co-wrote and co-directed with her mentor, touching on Hollywood beauty standards, colorism, and loving the skin you're in. Samirah X writes about her identity as an actress and combines it with her racialized experiences. An excerpt of Samirah X's short film, Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, is below.

Hi, my name is Andrea, and I'm 12 years old.
Excuse me; everyone, let's gather around. I would like you all to meet Angel. She is a wonderful actress, and she will now be playing the role of Juliet. Andrea, you'll now be playing the role of the nurse; okay, now let's get a roll on people because we don't have any time to waste.
Oh hell Nah, Angel has all the good lines. I worked my butt off for this role.
Snap out of it stay focused; what are you thinking?
I'm sick and tired of this body and skin holding me back ain't I enough.
Samirah X describes her recent project by saying, "The film centers around a very determined brown-skinned girl who gets thrown into an ongoing cycle of what she calls ambiguous acting auditions and vows to challenge the systemic stereotypes of the entertainment industry." The term ambiguous is used here to refer to girls who are or appear to be mixed race, often have lighter skin complexions, or have an ambiguous physical appearance with vague racial and ethnic backgrounds that are exotic in appearance. This sub-theme offers a look into how colorism is relevant in the world of acting, with brown-skinned or dark-skinned Black girls marginalized due to race. Hence, Samirah X is positioning Black girls as beautiful, which connects to the overarching theme, #MyBlackIsBeautiful. To follow, in the sub-theme, A Brown-skinned Girl's Self-worth, I described how Samirah X, through her identity as an actor and screenwriter, created opportunities for young Black girls to feel comfortable in their skin, which ties to her racialized experiences that impacted her in ways that hurt her self-esteem, vowing to make sure other brown girls' do not go through the same setbacks to their self-worth. In doing so, I showed how Samirah X's advertisement of her work helps her advocate for Black girls, specifically those with darker brown skin, to be seen as beautiful.

A Brown-skinned Girl’s Self-worth. In our first interview, Samirah X discussed that she had low self-esteem tied to her complexion, feeling as though she was too brown, not pretty due to her darker skin, compared to other Black girls, and how she had to learn to love herself, eliminate those feelings, and use her creativity to tell her story in the script of Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, to bring awareness to this issue in the acting industry. Specifically, Samirah X said, "Black Girl vs. ambiguous is just a film that I wrote based off of like colorism and industry. And how like you have to be a certain like skin color and how you have to be like to this certain standard to be beautiful and I feel like that diminishes a lot of black girls confidence even. Even
outside of the acting industry, just like in general. Oh, with that being said, like I put in, like the brown paper bag tests like if you were darker than a brown paper bag, then you're not beautiful, so a lot of those things I put in there because I'm a brown-skinned girl, and I feel like as if I'm not as, well I felt like if I wasn't light skin that I wasn't beautiful, so I had to learn my self-worth and that I was beautiful and to accept myself, so that really was what um it was really about, and to just showcase that a lot." Samirah X had to learn that being Black, explicitly having a darker skin tone, was beautiful, despite what society portrays, including what the acting industry seems to prefer, according to her. The following sub-section, #Bookme describes the experiences and identity of Samirah X, as she advocates for herself, a young Black girl who believes in herself.

#Bookme. Samirah X expressed the need for representation of people of color in the acting profession at the highest level, resulting in an Oscar. In her hashtags, she advertises herself, stating "book me" about calling attention to increasing the number of Black actresses in these highly regarded spaces of the field. In response to the #OscarSoWhite discussion on the lack of diversity present in the recipients of the Oscar awards, I asked Samirah X about in our second interview; she said, "I feel like that's that's pretty valid because you really don't see like people of color. At the Oscars, there's something mostly at the Oscars is always the same people all the time, winning Oscars and everything. So I feel like it's good to see new faces and have new people on set, and not just use the same people over and over again." Still, Samirah X can envision herself at the Oscars saying in an Instagram caption of her wearing a long, formal black gown on Oscar night, "So excited about the @oscars.awards.2021 being in person this year! Congratulations to all the nominees and winners I plan to work hard to be in your company one day. In the meantime I was getting me some red carpet practice yesterday myself lol [#chicagoactress #screenwriter #producer #blessedbeyondmeasure #bookme]." In addition, when
asked her thoughts on Black actresses cast in predominantly White films in our second interview, she said, "I think I would feel uncomfortable because with like White sets or whatever, and I always have like a Black hairdresser like certain makeup. Yeah it doesn't feel like it would be as inclusive because, like when you're around other Black people, you guys connect, like I don't really have a lot of things in common with White people." Samirah X's racialized experiences as a Black girl impact the type of work environment she would feel comfortable in as an actor of color. Overall, the main theme, #MyBlackIsBeautiful, and the sub-themes, (a) #bgva: Black Girls vs. Ambiguous, (b) A Brown-skinned Girl’s Self-worth, and (c) #Bookme serves as a depiction of the racialized experiences Samirah X's struggled with and overcame, and how her identity as an actress, screenwriter, and rising producer, is shaped by her Blackness. In the following paragraph, I hone in on the second major theme, #BlackGirlMagic Personified, to introduce how Samirah X embodied the special characteristics of being a Black girl, focusing on how she used social media to show the greatness of who she is, her identity.

**Theme 2: #BlackGirlMagic Personified**

Samirah X often used the hashtag #blackgirlmajic on her social media platforms, and she worked hard to personify it. For example, on TikTok, Samirah X posted a compilation video showing different clips of her, such as photo sessions, acting scenes, selfies, and video clips of herself, with music in the background playing the following song lyrics, "I guess I am just a play thing to you." She included the caption, "Black girl magic [star eye face emoji]" and the hashtag, "black girl," which shows pride in being Black, a large part of her identity. She also uploaded videos to her YouTube channel from time to time that varied between fun and information-based, such as homemade facials to videos dealing with her acting, such as previews of films she was in, and practice monologues. Samirah X brings the Black girl magic personality as a reaction
to her racialized experiences. In part, it is her response to the experiences that she and other
Black girls share in celebrating the good in herself and others that look like her. For example, on
her Instagram stories, Samirah X posted a picture of her with Netflix’s *The Upshaws*, teen
actress Khali Spraggins. Samirah X is working on a new project with the teen and shared a photo
of the two, where she urged her followers to support the teen and watch the show; which shows
how Samirah X celebrated the work and accomplishments of other Black teen girls who are on a
journey to make their dreams come true. Thus, Samirah X used Black girl magic to rewrite her
own story or script of her life. In the first sub-theme, I explain the evidence of *BlackGirlMagic*
present in Samirah X's identity as a youth writer. Here, advocacy for justice is tied to her
accomplishments, embodying and personifying the magic ingrained in who she is, her identity as
a teen girl of color. Below I explain how, by writing for justice, Samirah X's Blackness sets her
up for positive racialized experiences.

#YouthWriters. Samirah X won the Bronx Film Initiative's #StuckToTheScript, Youth
Screenwriting challenge award for Best Story for her script, *You Change*, which she
independently wrote. Samirah X described the story genre as drama and the theme as justice. She
posted the award on her Instagram feed twice, the first time with a caption that paid homage to
George Floyd, whose death inspired the piece, and the second post of the award caption read,
"Look what came in the mail last night! Can I just say one word to describe how I felt PROUD!
Thank you to @bronxfilminitiative and @crichmedia. I loved everything about this
competition!" Another part of Samirah X's, that of a youth writer, is shown here as she used
Instagram to inform others about her writing of scenes, scripts, and characters for short films.
Adding to this, in our first interview, I asked Samirah X to describe what she felt was her biggest
opportunity in her growth as a Black creator, and she discussed winning the #StuckToTheScript
award when she was 13 years old, proudly holding it up, in the cameras view to show it off while speaking about it. She said, "winning like this award when I was 13, I have it right here. So I took a writing class, and I got referred for this writing contest and actually ended up winning the award for Best Story. It was a really good feeling; I was really happy about it…because I didn't think I was gonna win because there's like...over 100 people in the contest." As a youth writer, Samirah X celebrates these moments that reward her for her hard work and adds a token, like this award, to her own Black girl magic keepsake box that lives within her. To follow, I highlight how Samirah X claims her identity as a Black actress, relating her affirmation to her racially-charged day-to-day experiences.

**I'm a Black Actress.** On her public TikTok, Samirah X posted a video of herself, with the text, "You think you can hurt my feelings? I'm a Black actress [line mouth face emoji]" on the screen. She is making it known that she has had to develop thick skin and resilience as a Black actress and, unfortunately, is used to being mistreated, disrespected, and feeling pain, which prevents people from hurting her feelings further. Thus, Samirah X's racialized experiences as an actress and future director of color impact her attitude in her everyday life. Being a Black actress has exposed her to and set her up for other lived experiences, which may be less than pleasant. The magic of it all is Samirah X continues the path of being in this profession, despite the challenges it has and will still bring in the future, as a Black actress in a predominately White career profession in the arts, specifically as an actor in Hollywood, one of her biggest aspirations. In true Black girl magic fashion, Samirah X draws from her internal power, successes, and accomplishments thus far and her support system to write her own story, literally and figuratively. This relates to the overall theme, *#BlackGirlMagic Personified* because it describes how Samirah X operated with a sense of perseverance, through her racially-infused
experiences related to her identity as not just an actress, but a Black actress. This sub-theme relates to the overall theme, #BlackGirlMagic Personified, because it describes how Samirah X operated with a sense of perseverance through her racially-infused experiences related to her identity as not just an actress but a Black actress. Following is a summary of how the final sub-theme, I Really do this Swimming [crying face emoji, sunglass face emoji], displays the many intersections of Samirah X’s identities, further solidifying #BlackGirlMagic Personified.

I Really do This Swimming [crying face emoji, sunglass face emoji]. Aside from her identity as an actress, Samirah X also identifies as a swimmer. More specifically, Samirah X identifies herself as a competitive swimmer and says she is a part of one of the mini Olympics programs and teams funded by USA swimming. Samirah X plans to swim on her high school’s varsity swim team and is proud of her swimming achievements, saying, "a couple of schools wanted me for swim" about her upcoming high school year. However, Samirah X will attend an all-girls performance arts high school where she will receive over 15,000 in scholarships based on her scores on the state exams she took at the end of her 8th grade middle school year. Samirah X recently graduated 8th grade from a Catholic school that has a predominantly White and Latinx student body.

Being a student-athlete is an important part of Samirah X's identity because she works hard to balance academics, the sport of swimming, and acting, which is evident in her social media. For example, Samirah X posts video clips and pictures of her swimming in practice and meets on her Instagram and TikTok. She used her public social media platforms to publicize being a student-athlete, an identity she works hard to solidify. In our second interview, Samirah X explained how a video of her swimming at her normal speed, after not swimming for a while, on Instagram represents her, saying, "I feel like it shows how eager I am how hard I go like to try
to be the best I can be as a swimmer and just in general as a student-athlete because I do take pride in being a student-athlete and being accurate. I love doing sports and being in school and getting good grades, so I feel like that all just falls into place, and I have a structured week and just being proactive, so yeah, I just feel like um that shows like how much how hard I worked to become like getting back to the speed that I was pre-covid. Just being able to bounce back."

Furthermore, on TikTok she captioned a video, “I really do this swimming shit tho [crying face emoji, sunglass face emoji]” with the hashtags #goat, #swim, and #swimming. She posted this video on TikTok as a response to a trend asking TikTokers to show themselves and the sport they play. Doing so, Samirah X continued to shape her identity as an athlete. Samirah X also used the hashtags #swim and #swimmer on her Instagram related content. In sum, the second main theme, #BlackGirlMagic Personified, showcased how this cases' literacy practices on social media spaces cultivated a sense of positivity around Blackness, promoted the talents of young girls of color, and fostered a sense of supernatural-like powers that Brown girls like herself embody, ones that directly to her racialized experiences and impact on her identity.

**Theme 3: #FedUp #NoJusticeNoPeace**

Samirah X often wrote about incidents of police brutality, police-involved shootings that seem racially motivated, and what appeared to be racist encounters involving Black people to her social media platforms, specifically Instagram. For example, Samirah X posted a picture of a news story about an Atlanta police shooting that involved a White officer and a Black male and captioned the news article saying, "So it happened again last night. Another Black man that dies because of police! I'm tired of asking why they hate us so much! [#fedup #nojusticenopeace brown fist emoji]." Additionally, Samirah X posts about Black culture and history, such as Kwanzaa and Juneteenth, to show how race impacts the lived experiences of individuals. In
addition, she highlighted Black arts-based festivals where Black creators such as actors, actresses, and directors, are heard and seen, such as the *Black Harvest Film Festival*, *Charlotte Black Film Festival*, and the *Las Vegas Black Film Festival* where some of the projects she worked with were official selections. Samirah X also supported the fight for justice for the Black community and spread awareness through her hashtags, such as #freedom, #nojusticenopeace, and #blacklivesmatter, which was her way of adding to advocacy efforts and her response to being fed up with the racism and injustice towards Blacks. To follow, I present three sub-themes, specifically, (a) *Why are y'all Celebrating the 4th - Exactly*, (b) *Working on my own Independence Today. Enjoy ya'll Holiday*, and (c) *Now the Healing can Begin* to speak to how Samirah X used literacies on social media to demonstrate how she felt, in particular, being fed up with the racial unrest, thus, doing her part to engage in advocating for racial justice.

Consequently, the first theme celebrates her *Blackness* by privileging Juneteenth, a recently recognized national holiday, and denounces the White supremacy of the fourth of July.

**Why are y'all Celebrating the 4th - Exactly.** On her Instagram stories, Samirah X posted the text, "Why are y'all celebrating the 4th - Exactly" in White letters on a Black background, speaking to her preference to celebrate Juneteenth, which relates more to her due to the connection being Black. There is evidence of how her identity as a Black person impacts her decision to see Juneteenth as her own celebration of freedom and the freedom of the Blacks before her. For example, on Samirah X's Instagram feed, she posted a post with two photos, both show her standing outside wearing a black shirt with the writing "freedom est. 1865" on the front in red and green lettering, one with her hand in the shape of a fist raised high, and one with her showing the peace sign with her fingers. The post caption reads, "Happy Juneteenth! Our ancestors fought for our freedom, and I honor them by working hard every day!" She included
the hashtags #childofgod, #juneeteenthcelebration, #blackstoriesmatter, and #ourancestorsaresurvivors. Samirah X is reflecting on the experiences of all the Blacks before her who were in search of freedom. In addition, Samirah X posted a repost of a meme of Juneteenth to her Instagram story with green, red, yellow text on a Black background, which read, “Juneteenth. Dream like Martin, Lead like Harriet, Fight Like Malcolm, Write like Samirah X, Speak like Frederick, Dare like Shirley, Think like Garvey, Reclaim like Maxine, Education like W. E. B., Challenge like Rosa, Inspire Like Obama, Win like Kamala.” Like the first post, Samirah X’s content represents the now recognized federal holiday, Juneteenth, celebrating and honoring the freedom of African-American slaves. Thus, her posts on Juneteenth are related to Samirah X’s racialized experiences, identity, and connection to Black history and Black independence. Here, Samirah X pays homage to the racialized experiences of others and reflects on her own experiences, which she hopes make her ancestors proud, which are aspects woven into her literacy practices. For her, being fed up is grounded in Black people’s activist work before her. Therefore, there is an assertion that the work is not complete; thus, she argues for justice, and until the Black community receives it, she vows to pay back those before her by actively seeking justice. In the next sub-theme, I focus on how Samirah X is fed up with the false freedom portrayed by the fourth of July and provide a counternarrative to how she defines her independence. Here, she used social media literacies to present how being active as a change agent, through her identity as a screenwriter, related to her lived experiences grounded in racialized notions.

**Working on my own Independence Today. Enjoy ya’ll Holiday.** On Instagram and Twitter, Samirah X posted a video clip of her scrolling through her You Change word document, with the text added, "working on my own independence today. Enjoy y’all holiday [red heart
emoji]" about our nation's independence day. Additionally, she described the racially charged experience on her Instagram and how it inspired her writing of You Change. Samirah X wrote the following in a caption under a picture of a memorial mural of George Floyd she posted on her Instagram,

On this day one year ago George Floyd's murder by the hands of the Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin would be a turning point in our history. George Floyd died the day before my birthday, and my family tried to celebrate my birthday in spite of, but all we could do was watch, and cry, and talk about how this is still happening, and on that day, May 25, 2020, I knew I had to do something. My mom planned a trip before the virus to take me to LA for my birthday; we went anyway and found ourselves trapped in a war zone. Violent protest, the national guards and police throwing tear gas at 13 I was hit with the ugly truth about America, and it hurt so bad. My mom allowed me to protest, and it was that weekend I took my feelings and began writing what now became my award-winning Script called "You Change" because George Floyd's life will not be in vain as I forever changed. May he rest in Power!

This sub-theme relates to the overall theme, #FedUp #NoJusticeNoPeace, by providing an example of how Samirah X takes her independence into her own hands by taking action through her writing of the race-related piece, You Change. Also, it connects the hashtag #NoJusticeNoPeace to the protest surrounding a nationally televised Black male's death and police brutality. Therefore, Samirah sarcastically told people part of her audience to enjoy their Fourth of July, while in return, denouncing the holiday and instead engaged in doing something about being fed up. In the next sub-theme, Now the Healing can Begin, Samirah X enacted literacies on social media related to a call for justice. This theme explores her perspective as a
teen of color fed up with injustices and how the country is run by those with power; however, she offered a sense of peace and justice by embracing the change in the office and a new commander in chief.

**Now the Healing can Begin.** On Instagram, Samirah X posted a picture of her watching the presidential debate with then-President Trump and the Former Vice President. She wrote, "This man is just ignorant and hateful I can't" in her caption. There was much concern from Black and Latinx communities on Trump's views on race-centered topics. In a subsequent post, Samirah X posted a picture of at the time, Douglas Emhoff, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, Jill Biden, and President-elect Joe Biden attending a memorial service to honor the American victims of the coronavirus pandemic at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool in Washington. She captioned the picture, "What an evening! Now the healing can begin! #excellence."

Highlighting what she identified as moving towards a direction of healing, Samirah X posted a picture of the newly-elected Madame Vice President Kamala Harris to her Instagram feed and wrote the caption, "Let's Go!" [#kamalaharris and #blackgirlmagic]. From Samirah X's perspective, there seemed to be a sense of positivity of what the new administration may bring.

Similarly, this same positivity was held for another person of color in the past administration and expressed online, specifically former President Obama. In a previous Instagram post, Samirah X posted former President Barak Obama and wrote the caption, "My President #obamaforevermypresident."

**Besides political posts, Samirah X posted the text "Guilty! Amen!" on her Instagram story and removed the ability for others to comment or respond. She wrote this the day the guilty verdict came in from Derek Chauvin's case in the murder of George Floyd, which is an example of how she engaged in literacies to advocate for social justice, connecting to the overall theme**
Thus, adding to the healing that began for a nation, the Black community, and our allies. Overall, Samirah X used social media to express her frustrations with the racially-charged deaths of Blacks and support for taking justice into the hands of the oppressed, being okay with disrupting the peace of others, for the betterment of a just society. This theme explained how she does that by tapping into her screenwriter and teen activist identities. The section that follows provides an introduction to Laura’s narrative.

Laura’s Historical and Contextual Description

Unfortunately, I could not observe Laura off of Instagram and Twitter, the two social media platforms she utilized during the study. With no observations in settings offline, I used artifacts she shared with me and referenced informal interviews to draw from, such as a poem she wrote her senior year of high school and her feature on the website of an international organization she works with, to shape, in part, who she is to give history and context to her case narrative. I also used informal conversations I had with her off of social media. This section provides insight into what Laura wrote and advocated for off social media. For instance, in the piece, To Be White, Laura wrote about her racialized experiences as a brown youth from the age of 5 to the present day, specifically as a Latine individual who, at some point, wanted to know how it was to be White, in part due to her schooling experiences. The summer after she graduated high school and before her freshman college year, her high school published the poem in their literary arts magazine after being reviewed by a group of students; since I only have one written artifact, the piece in its entirety is below.

To Be White

I am 5.
I walk into a school of children who look like me, mexican.
We all want to be White.
At home, my parents began to speak less spanish so I wouldn’t have
trouble.
I learned to be respectful and hard working so I wouldn’t get caught up in trouble.

I grow up and I’m proficient in a language my parents didn’t grow up with.
To be White
I am 10.

I transfer. Only some look like me.
My classmates are American. They are white.
I learned English to be white. And we both spoke English.
But so did their parents and their grandparents.
Their ancestors lived here.
I listened to them and I began to adapt to the way they spoke.
I changed my tongue.
To be more White.
I am 14.

I walk into high school. 90% of them don’t look like me.
In one class I am the only minority.
But I prepared myself.
I learned how to speak English and I learned how to stay out of trouble.
But I hadn’t learned enough.
Red Hats.
I met people who supported a person who wanted to put my people in cages.
I met people who supported a person who wanted to take my family away.
I was done learning to be more white.
I came home and told my parents I didn’t want to be more white.
I want to learn Spanish, our traitorous tongue.
I want to be able to talk the way my family does.
I want to learn to make empanadas and tamales and arroz the way my family does.
So I learned to do these things.
To be more me.
I will be 18.

I will walk into college. It won’t matter who looks like me.
I learned to speak English and Spanish.
I learned to speak up.
I am a person who works to stay educated on issues.
I am a person who works against prejudice.
I learned who I wanted to be.
I will trudge through this final stretch.
I will walk into a university where I can learn what matters to me.
So I worked hard to get to a point that I can be myself.
To be more free
Laura wrote poetry and engaged in free writing to express herself for most of her high school experience, only getting social media in her senior year, at almost 18 years old. Aside from poetry and freewriting, Laura works as the Director of Internal Communications for an international organization that is youth-led and provides resources to youth advocates and supports marginalized youth as they work on environmental injustice and climate crisis. In addition to this role, Laura is on the Administration team of the action-oriented organization, serving as an Executive Assistant, and is responsible for communication between departments. The organization aims to support marginalized youth by providing them with the resources to undertake the climate crisis in their local communities, dismantle environmental injustice, and help create healthy communities. Therefore, Laura is part of a community that helps cultivate her identity as an advocate, climate justice supporter, and intersectional environmentalist. After graduating high school in 2020, Laura moved out of state to attend college, majoring in political science and minoring in social justice. Laura has dreams and ambitions of eventually starting an organization to educate kids nationwide, live in New York City, grow her impact, go to law school to focus on Civil Rights Law, and give back to her local home community.

**Case Narrative**

This section highlights Laura’s thematic case narrative, as it relates to the themes, (a) *For the People*, (b) *Climate Activist Meets Advocate for Racial Justice*, (c) *Stop Making us Uncomfortable*, which showcase how she enacted literacy practices on social media related to her racialized experiences and describes how those literacies shaped her identity in the process.

**Theme 1: For the People**

Laura's content on Instagram and Twitter centers on politics, environment, climate action, race, and support and allyship for people of color, such as Blacks, Asians, and Latinx
communities and those in the LGBTQIA+ community. Being an advocate is a large part of Laura's identity. She is a teen that is "for the people," and it is no surprise she is so interested in politics, government, and activism for marginalized people. Laura often criticizes White mainstream and dominant ideologies, calling attention to the experiences of marginalized individuals, such as people of color. As a Brown teen, Laura thinks with her culture and the cultures of minoritized people in mind, pointing to the overlooked racialized experiences of many in this country. For example, Laura used social media, for example, Instagram, as a way to advocate for people to educate themselves about what she described as “the true history of this country.” For instance, the content of one repost read, "Did you know that the Declaration of Independence wasn't actually signed on July 4th? If that blows your mind, wait until you learn about every other facet of U.S. history you were either not taught or taught with a whitewashed lens." The post goes on to list suggestions for people to read and listen to so that they are educated on the reasons why she and other people of color think the Fourth of July “isn't something to celebrate.” She also reposted content on how people can "opt-out of the 4th of July and Uplift BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and People of Color] instead" which included resources to learn about BIPOC experiences in the US. and help others’ unlearn skewed history. Therefore, Laura counters the nationally celebrated holiday by looking at how marginalized people racialized experiences to tell a different story, one that may not be as popular or glorifying to tell. Overall, her actions show she is truly For the People, exemplifying the first central theme of her narrative.

Similarly, Laura reposted a post to her Instagram stories about incarcerated Black men who will remain in jail and unable to celebrate the emancipation of slaves because courts were closed for Juneteenth. For instance, an excerpt of the content read,
a federal holiday for the abolishment of slavery but no concern given to the Black people who are incarcerated and experiencing modern-day version of it, a federal holiday for the abolishment of slavery but no federal recognition of the need for reparations a federal holiday for the abolishment of slavery that gives non Black people the day off too...And remember, if you make purchases this week, make it at Black-owned business.

Here, she acknowledged the progression towards diversity, equity, and inclusivity but reminded people of the reality of the racialized experiences and perspectives of people of color still present, even with the progress towards a more socially just society. Thus, Laura embraced her identity as an activist, particularly, For the People.

Furthermore, Laura reposted a post from Cori Bush, US Representative in Missouri, on her Instagram story that spoke to Juneteenth and other necessary things needed beyond recognizing it as a national holiday. The text read, "It's Juneteenth AND reparations. It's Juneteenth AND end police violence + War on Drugs. It's Juneteenth AND end housing + education apartheid. It's Juneteenth AND teach the truth about White supremacy in our country. Black liberation is its totality must be prioritized." However, Laura did not just repost this, but she added her own text to the post, saying, "she always says it best," supporting the message of this post. Additionally, Laura reposted a series of posts about Juneteenth and reparations, specifically calling attention to why the conversation around Juneteenth cannot be complete without discussing reparations. Continuing the support for people of color, Laura retweeted a tweet that read, "black authors you should read to support on juneteenth thread," and included a thread of book recommendations. These examples show that Laura used her voice to highlight her and other minoritized people's perspectives, enacting she really is, For the People, responding boldly and unapologetically to the White narratives that often overshadow
marginalized people's experiences and perspectives. In the section that follows, I present the first sub-theme, *Do Something*, to offer an account of Laura’s action-oriented literacy practices that demands people to engage, in one way or another, insisting on activism and turning to personal racialized experiences and those of others to bring attention to why doing something is no longer optional, in her opinion.

**Do Something.** Laura's relationship with other people of color gets stronger when racial issues are at the center of what is going on in her life or society; however, she did not have the same kind of relationships with White people in her life, who often let her down during times where racialized matters were present. For example, Laura tweeted, "Really genuinely disappointed that the people in my corner when I'm at a point of distress due to racial issues always ends up being other poc [people of color]. She went on to write on Twitter, "Honestly feeling really upset about it right now. White people have no excuses. You know your poc [people of color] friends are hurting. Do something." This tweet calls attention to the lack of support Laura feels she received from White people, and in return, she asked them to take action. In addition, on her Instagram story, Laura urged people, specifically White people and those wanting to be allies, to "try harder and do better" by giving them actionable items to do besides posting a black screen on Instagram as a way to prevent people from "contributing to performative activism," as she described it. Specifically, Laura's bulleted list suggested that people "register to vote, sign/call/donate, educate yourself, and watch/read things such as books, shows, and movies to help visualize the real world struggles ppl [people] are going through."

Consequently, Laura provided these resources to encourage white people to be active, as they strive to be better allies and develop activism.
Furthermore, Laura encouraged White people to be reflective. For instance, she retweeted, "reminder to my white peers: you should be asking yourself why your friend group is all white, have you not created a safe space for poc [people of color]? did you push away friends of color by not supporting them? sided with your racist friends in bias incidents?" Extending the message, she added original text, which read, "reflect and change," to encourage her White peers to think about the lack of diversity in their friendships, consider their actions, and how they may impact people of color. Embracing the importance of being active, Laura frequently reposted resources on her Instagram stories for what people could do as a non-Black ally. Because of this, her work ties directly with the main theme, *For the People*, as she enacted literacies related to her activist identity.

In sum, Laura encouraged her Instagram and Twitter audience to, *Do Something*, beyond engaging in performative activism, which she expressed as an all-talk, no-game approach to activism. Thus, when posting online, Lara consciously thinks about audience and purpose, saying, "In terms of audience, I usually consider the level of knowledge I expect my followers to have on any given subject before posting. I don't want to share information without background or alternatively share something they already know about in detail. She goes on to add, "in terms of purpose, my only goal there is to educate others and share my experiences." Hence, Laura used social media to encourage others to "end the silence, use their voice, and don't let anyone stop you." Consequently, she encouraged taking action in ways such as "actively signing petitions/calling in, having conversations, and calling people out." As she calls for the need to educate friends, family members, and strangers to avoid being bystanders, Laura spreads the message for people to "never turn the other cheek when injustice is occurring." As she encouraged people to be active, she remained considerate of the racially infused experiences of
others, moving beyond herself; thus, her identity as a champion for the people is revealed, making Laura's agentive literacy practices the heart of her work, as she strives for racial justice. In the next sub-theme, Representation Matters, I sought to showcase another layer to how Laura enacted literacies, For the People, by pointing to how she used social media to advocate for positive Latinx representation in society.

**Representation Matters.** With representation in mind, Laura wanted people to learn about her culture; in a tweet, she said, "do you ever get sad that there are so many beautiful cultures that u haven't learned about yet? like i love my own culture so much and it makes me sad to think some will never know about it and then i think there are also ones i will never know about. the thought comes up every time i teach someone about something ive known and loved my whole life that is completely new to them." With that, Laura shows that as a self-identified Latina or Latine person, she wants people to know about who she is and how important it is for her to represent the Latine culture. For example, Laura showed who she is in part on social media. For instance, she incorporated her pronouns in her Instagram bio; specifically, she/her, the international environmental organization she works with, her home state, the university she attends, and year of college graduation are also in her bio. In addition, she incorporated two flag emojis in her bio, the Ecuador flag and Mexico flag, as well as the Spanish text, "chulla vid specifically an Ecuadorian term that translates to "You Only Live Once" in English. Laura identifies as a Latine or Latina female who is part Mexican and part Ecuadorian.

Laura used Twitter to advocate for Latinx and Black representation in pop culture, such as movies, musicals, and social media, such as TikTok. For example, Laura tweeted about the representation of the Latinx community in the musical/drama in The Heights, set in New York, saying, "watching in the heights was one of my favorite moments bc [because] i don't think i've
EVER seen another movie with so much latine representation and that was this well known/ in the mainstream US news. hearing the pride in the spanish sung was everything!!" Furthermore, Laura highlighted the Latine representation in an upcoming Disney movie. For example, Laura added the text, "the representation!!! [teary eye emoji] i could not be more excited!!!" She also added the text, "a disney movie with a brown skin latina with glasses as the main character... let's goooo." The post included a repost of a teaser trailer for Disney's movie Encanto. Here, Laura is celebrating the representation of Latine people. Laura is also celebrating the progress Disney has made as far as representation is concerned and reflects on a racialized experience of her childhood, saying in a tweet, "to the kid in like 2nd grade who told me i didn't look like snow white on halloween cause i wasn't white, HA!"

Also, Laura supported the need for Black people's representation and discussed how the Black community dance culture is replicated without due credit on predominantly White social media sites such as TikTok. Though Laura used TikTok to watch videos, she also calls attention to the Black community's perspectives on how their original content diminishes on a predominately White user platform. For example, Laura retweeted a tweet from Los Angeles Times that reads, "Black creators have birthed some of the biggest phenomena on the Internet. As the moves become increasingly widespread - and usurped by white faces - their origins fade into oblivion," with a picture of female rapper Meg thee Stallion who has many TikTok dances to her music. The tweet brings awareness to Black people who do not get the creative credit on TikTok once White people become the face of what they started. The headline in the tweet reads, "Give Black people credit: Black TikTok stars strike, demand credit for their work." Laura explains why Black people may have a problem with TikTok, something being brought to light recently. In sum, this sub-theme contributes to the idea that being *For the People* does not
always mean only your own community of people but extends to other populations of people as well. For instance, Laura advocates for representation for whom she described as Latine people and the Black community, as she draws from the racialized experiences of people of color from different marginalized racial backgrounds. Therefore, this sub-theme further illustrated her identity as an activist. In the final sub-theme of this section, We’re Loud, why Aren’t you?, I privilege Laura's call to solicit others' voices and others' actions to contribute to racial justice and other diversity, equity, and inclusion issues., showing that it is not always easy to be For the People, especially when they do not always adopt similar stances.

We're Loud, why Aren't you? Laura posted content on her Instagram story about White people who claim to be allies, not speaking up about issues. In this repost of Saved By the Bell, a popular 90's series meme, the text read, "The rage of the oppressed is never the same as the rage of the privileged." Laura added her commentary to the post, writing,

it will never surprise me that every time there is a human rights crisis, my friends of the global majority are the ones who i see speak up. i'm always waiting on white "allies" to finally break their silence. i see all of you who are posting things that fit the aesthetic of your story or feed but never sharing support for the very people you claim to "stand with." we're loud, why aren't you? please don't ask me how to help if you won't take the action to do attempt in the first place.

Adding to the call for White people who claim to be allies to speak up, Laura reposted a post about anti-racism and encouraged others to speak out and not resort to any of the popular responses: "injustice auto-replies," specifically those that fall into different categories such as, "I don't really use Instagram that way, people," "I just don't have anything new to add folks," "I can and will stay quiet because my privilege allows me to." Laura challenges people to do their
homework, decenter themselves. She reposted this same post to her stories right after and added her text, which reads, "Read it again" for emphasis. It is no surprise that Laura is very passionate about people "getting loud," as she says, and not being quiet because their privilege allows them to, demanding White people publicly condemn White supremacy. Since Laura noticed the racialized experiences of people of color significantly differ from Whites, she intentionally brings them into socially-just work, calling on their allyship, requesting their voices to be loud and bold, further illuminating how, at her core, she is entirely For the People. The next section provides an overview of the second central theme, Climate Activist Meets Advocate for Racial Justice to express the intersections of Laura’s activism.

Theme 2: Climate Activist Meets Advocate for Racial Justice

In the second major theme, Climate Activist Meets Advocate for Racial Justice, I illustrated Laura's identity as a climate activist for racial justice. Here, Laura's experiences as a person of color enabled her to adopt the aforementioned identities. This theme, and the sub-themes (a), #ClimateJustice (b) Environmentalist for the Marginalized, (c) #IntersectionalEnvironmentalist, #IntersectionalEnvironmentalism, work together to tell the story of Laura's social media practices online, specifically on Instagram and Twitter. For instance, in her Instagram story, Laura answered the question, "have you found the purpose of life?" by typing the reply, "i think it changes throughout different periods of our lives from learning about ourselves and how we play a role in the world to actively fulfilling that role and encouraging others to join you. i'm lucky that I have always had the sense that my role is to protect God's creations (in my view) as in, people & planet and have been learning about how I can do that more every day. i think everyone's role is unique to their drive and experiences."

Hence, Laura's identity as a climate activist and an advocate for racial justice for people of color
is hard to miss on her Instagram and Twitter. Additionally, Laura’s passion for climate, the environment, and life on earth is found on her social media platforms. For example, one rare post to her Instagram feed of five slides included visuals and text that Laura wrote herself. Laura wrote a poem titled, *an ode to earth* and posted this writing on her Instagram feed for earth day, which read,

```plaintext
we are blessed to walk this earth.
to be and exist with the land.
the creatures are community, with our loved ones, we lock hands.
we are blessed to love and care.
to be conscious of our choice.
the way we treat our people, the way we use our voice.
today, and everyday, we must demand restorative climate justice.
the climate justice movement cannot just be advocating for preservation of parks and saving endangered species, it must be intersectional. we have to recognize that Black and Brown communities worldwide are being disproportionately disadvantaged because of air and water pollution, food insecurity, and more.
i hear a lot that we, as individuals, cannot really do much to change environmental policy or action. one thing i have always believed in is the power of the people, as a collective, we must do what is accessible to us - consuming less, mending clothes, vote with our dollar, taking public transport, calling local legislators, protesting, or other sustainable activities, and as we do this, we also have to remind ourselves that a big part of this is beyond our ability. do not put blame on yourself for not being able to change the world alone.

A common rhetoric that policy makers love to spread is that they are "relying on the youth to make change." they seem to forget: THEY are the ones in power with the ability to put in legislation that saves the earth.
our purpose as youth is not to clean up the destruction that years of white colonialism and lack of adequate care for the earth created. i hope in the
future, there never have to be youth activists. I hope in the future, young people will be able thrive in and with nature. and keep an eye out today and in the upcoming years for companies who will claim to be fighting for intersectional environmentalism with one or two products and a statement on their Instagram while simultaneously polluting our communities and funding the oil industry. keep in mind that environmental justice is for more than the land. it’s for the people living here too.

Her caption to the writing above stated, ”an ode to life on earth and some thoughts for today.” Further, she showed recognition to those she calls her ”climate justice family” and ends her caption with ”sending love and power to my fellow youth advocating for justice” [#climatejustice #climatejusticenow]. Laura also posted this poem on her Twitter account. Thus, Laura used her piece, ode to life on earth, in a way that speaks to her identity as a climate justice advocate and expresses the ways marginalized people are impacted. In the sub-theme that follows, #ClimateJustice, I provide an overview of how Laura’s advocacy efforts towards climate justice are carried out on social media, a place that provides a sounding board for her identity work.

#ClimateJustice. Laura supported climate action and environmental justice. On her feed, Laura posted on the climate crisis, marching from Trump Tower in Chicago to city hall to call for the government to recognize the climate emergency; she wrote in one caption, ”reduce.reuse.recycle.RESIST. do something about your future. Be conscious of your decisions and know that everyone makes a difference. There is no denying the state our earth is in; we must do what we can to save it” and included the hashtag, #climatestrike. Here, I demonstrated how Laura’s advocacy for climate justice is demonstrated in her protesting experiences,
something that people of color historically engage in to seek justice, express themselves, and make a difference in the things that matter to them.

About climate change, Laura retweeted, "this is not something that we will see the effects of in 10-20 years. it is something that we are seeing the effects of RIGHT NOW." She went on to tweet, "i don't know how else to express how DIRE the climate crisis is right now and has been for a while other than just telling people to observe weather patterns and the extreme "natural" disasters and temperatures that we are experiencing today due to climate change." In addition, Laura added the following text to a repost on her Instagram story, "This is happening now. We can not sit around and wait til 2030 or 2050 to demand action from our leaders."This type of post is typical of Laura as she used social media platforms like Instagram to call attention to global warming, speak about the need to demand action from those in positions to make changes, and educate people on the climate crisis, all pointing to the way her identity as a climate activist is portrayed on social media.

Another part of Laura's identity is her status as a vegan, which is not a surprise since she is an active environmentalist. Laura posted information about being vegan, vegan food, vegan anti-indigeneity, indigenous sustainability, global climate justice, indigenous communities and meat, and actions on her Instagram story. Laura is very action-oriented towards the environment, even in her diet as a vegan. Laura being vegan is a big part of her identity and is connected to being an environmentalist. She tweeted about the support of this from her friends, saying, "my nonvegan friends who are so supportive of my veganism and pick places i can eat when we go out are so thoughtful i appreciate it." This example showcases how her identity as a climate activist is carried out in her day-to-day lived experiences, ingrained in her lifestyle, and shared through her online literacy practices.
Laura's identity as an environmentalist further impacted other aspects of her lived experiences. For example, Laura reposted a video from an Instagram account on her Instagram stories about the environmental impact of fireworks. Laura is a true environmentalist and is very consistent in her climate and environmental efforts. The video speaks about the toxicity fireworks create, the pollutants that affect the air, water, and soil, and the effect it has on wildlife, people with PTSD, and those who live in low income communities who have to breathe in the toxic chemicals. The video also speaks about metal compounds. Most importantly, the video ends with, "You also can't decolonize a holiday rooted in genocide and colonialism." Laura's posts about fireworks solidify her identity as a climate activist. For example, one repost read, "How do 4th of July fireworks impact our environment?" Laura's practices as a climate activist and being climate active are evident in her posts, magnifying her identity. In the next sub-theme, Environmentalist for the Marginalized, I focused on the intersections between Laura's identity as a climate activist and a racial justice advocate. The sub-theme explains how race impacts her social media literacies, as Laura educated followers on how environmental justice impacts marginalized people's lived experiences.

Environmentalist for the Marginalized. In her unique way, Laura intersected climate and environmental justice with social justice. Not only does she support environmental justice, but she intersected this with her posts on racial justice. For example, Laura reposted a post on her Instagram stories, "Black communities are exposed to 56% more pollution than is caused by their consumption. For Latinx communities, it is 63%" She also posted, "keep in mind, environmental justice is for more than the land; it's for the people living here too." Educating her social media followers about environmental racism, Laura reposted the definition of environmental racism to her Instagram stories, which read, "the process whereby environmental decisions, actions, and
policies result in racial discrimination or the creation of racial advantages." In addition, she reposted an example of environmental racism in the US, noting Flint, Michigan. Doing so, Laura intersects how race permeates the marginalization of people of color in ways that tie to their lived experiences here on Earth, speaking to the environment they occupy.

In support of Black Lives Matter, Laura discussed recent police brutality cases such as George Floyd, Daunte Wright, Ma’Khia Bryant, and the one that hits close to home for her, and the hardest to deal with is that of Adam Toledo, who is from a nearby neighborhood where she lived, is part of the Latine community, and was the age of her younger brother, 13 when a Chicago police officer killed him. Laura posted a pic of Adam Toledo on what would have been his 14th birthday. The picture is a painted mural of Adam Toledo, located in the Little Village neighborhood, a Chicago neighborhood where he was killed. She also tweeted, "his hands were fucking up. he was 13. im so over this. fuck cpd [chicago police department] a million times." Laura also tweeted, "praying for my chicago latine community today" in response to the shooting. In addition, she retweeted a post about a high school Latino boy named Ever Lopez, who wore the Mexican flag, to pay homage to his family's culture, over his shoulder while walking across the stage during graduation. He was denied his diploma, and the police escorted his family out. As an environmentalist and climate activist, Laura shows support for Black and Brown communities that are faced with racism, injustice, and inequality. This example shows how race intersects with an environmentalist lifestyle, adding to the narrative that Laura’s literacy practices relate to the racialized events she is exposed to, linking directly to her identity as a supporter of marginalized communities and people.

#IntersectionalEnvironmentalist, #IntersectionalEnvironmentalism. Laura intersected environmentalism and her identity as an environmentalist with racial equality and liberation for
marginalized people such as the LGBTQIA+ community and people part of the Black and Brown community. Extending the conversation of marginalized people of color, Laura highlighted the relationship between race and the experiences of people of color who identify as LGBTQIA+. For example, she reposted a post to her Instagram story that read, "Intersectionality is the future." The caption discussed intersectionality between race and sexuality. It highlighted the trans community and Black trans women at the forefront of the LGBTQIA+ community and included hashtags such as intersectionalenviormentalism, intersectionaleviornmentalist, liberationnow, thefutureisintersectional, LGBTQrightsarehumanrights, and Pride21. In addition, Laura reposted questions to help queer and trans-Black, indigenous, and people of color (QTBIPOC) access mental health treatment on her Instagram story. She also acknowledged how it is challenging for them to find providers that align with their identity and provided the resource for people of color who identified as LGBTQIA+, but the post acknowledges these are good questions for anyone worried about having a therapist affirming their identity. Laura shared this tool to help eliminate potential stress as QTBIPOC look for identity-affirming mental health providers. She also reposted a resource on her Instagram stories for Brown people titled, "Mental Health Resources for Latinx And Hispanic Communities from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, who do not identify as LGBTQ+ community but need to speak to professionals about their racialized experiences. Furthermore, at the beginning of Pride Month, Laura reposted a picture to her Instagram of people participating in a pride parade with the text, "Important Black and Latina Leaders of the LGBTQ+ Movement." Here, Laura intersected race and sexual orientation and highlighted how marginalized people, including people of color, have influenced the LGBTQIA+ movement.
Therefore, Laura speaks to the racialized experiences of Latinx and Black LGBTQIA+ people on her social media platforms and considers herself an ally for all marginalized people. Therefore, this sub-theme adds an additional layer to Laura’s advocacy for racial justice through intersections of other marginalized identities, such as people of color who identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. In the third central theme, *Stop Making Us Uncomfortable*, I presented Laura’s perspectives centered on her racialized experiences, which caused her and others to feel uncomfortable. Her literacies on social media showcased how she speaks back to this, using social media.

**Theme 3: Stop Making us Uncomfortable**

In the third theme, *Stop Making us Uncomfortable*, I considered the race-infused experiences of Laura through her high school years to her current educational journey as a freshman college student at a predominantly White institution. In other words, Laura’s schooling experiences in high school and during her first year of college connects to her race and identity as a Latinx teen. In our first interview, Laura explained how she wrote poetry in high school to express herself as a brown girl, saying,

One major thing throughout high school was I wrote a lot of the poetry, or just general free writing that I was doing was related to my identity or my experiences with that at my high school. So, even just like assignments in English class where we were like having to write a poem, I was definitely writing about my experiences; I had the opportunity to submit one of my poems about those experiences to the literary and arts magazine at my school and it got published a year ago…I think it's kind of a way for me to like, let out my emotions, and kind of articulate what I'm thinking in my mind and how I'm feeling…it would get reviewed by like a group of students. I was on that review board
my freshman year, and so it took me a lot of courage to submit that. Being on that review board, I kind of saw how harshly they were with like reviewing pieces.

Despite this, Laura submitted *To Be White*, the poem highlighted in the introduction to her case, featured in her case's context. Adding to this, Laura's racialized experiences as a Brown teen at her predominantly White high school became the topic of her tweets on Twitter. Laura called attention to her classroom experiences in the Spanish class she took as a Senior. Laura tweeted, "if you can't speak spanish well, you shouldn't be a spanish teacher. And if you are white and teaching spanish speaking culture, stop "othering" latino people. It makes the latinos in your class uncomfortable." This tweet expressed her experience as a Brown student in a class taught by a White teacher who created a negative classroom culture for her and other Brown teens. Laura discussed her high school and college experiences as a Brown student, mostly around White peers, teachers, and professors on social media, specifically Instagram and Twitter, demonstrating that her social media literacies are situated in her lived experiences. In the first sub-theme, *Discussion Posts That Challenge*, I explain how Laura used Twitter to reflect on how she launched critical perspectives into online spaces. Here, Laure’s identity as an activist is carried out in advocating for a change of mindset to promote diversity, equity, inclusivity to encourage a more socially just online community, classroom environment, college campus, and society.

**Discussion Posts That Challenge.** Laura tweeted, "ngl [not gonna lie] my discussion posts for my class are pretty insightful and really push my classmates to challenge their current ways of thinking and im really proud of myself for that," in response to how the work she is doing in college fosters critical thinking of her peers and promotes necessary conversations in academic settings. Further, she used class assignments, such as her responses to discussion post
prompts to encourage others to think about different perspectives, and become more inclusive, which she feels good about, and in return, expressed her satisfaction for doing so on Twitter. In the sub-theme that follows, *It’s Exhausting*, I focus on the toll action-oriented work takes on Laura’s mental state, which I described as exhaustion. This sub-theme intersects with the central theme because it speaks to how Laura’s racialized experiences, relating to feeling uncomfortable at times when marginalized, become exhausting for a young girl of color.

**It's Exhausting.** Laura is mentally exhausted due to her efforts into having conversations with her college professors about creating better experiences for students of color. For example, Laura posted several tweets about her experience as a self-described Latine college student at a predominantly White university. For example, on Twitter, she wrote, "tired of having to have meeting after meeting with my white professors telling them how to make the class more even tolerable for poc [people of color] and low income students. it's like we don't exist in their minds." She followed this tweet with, "i’ve had to meet with 3/6 of my professors last semester and just got done with the first one this semester. it's exhausting." Laura went on to tweet, "not to mention the fact that i dropped one of my classes after the first two sessions because i could already tell it was gonna be bad. why do i have to sacrifice my time, energy, and education for the convenience of white adults?" In these tweets, Laura called attention to not only her but other college students of color's racialized experiences, whom White professors taught. Thus, she showed how active she is in changing the classroom culture, calling attention to a lack of diversity, equity, and inclusivity, even though she is exhausted with the process. Overall, Laura's exhaustion results from her activism towards a justice-oriented and anti-racist educational experience as a student of color at a predominantly White institution. In the last sub-theme, *Dear University*, Laura's advocacy is on display, as I provided an example of how she used literacy
practices on Twitter to address college administrators, requiring them to take the pressure off people of color to educate the student body on how to be anti-racist. She does this through a carefully crafted tweet in a letter format. Thus, connecting to the main theme by asking others to stop making people of color feel uncomfortable, including those with powerful positions in the school.

**Dear University.** Laura currently attends a private university in the Midwest. This study takes place during her first year as a college student, which is the moment Laura noticed how students of color who attended the university became the go-to for educating the student body about how to be antiracists, something she and other students of color feel the burden of way too often. In response to it, Laura tweeted, "dear SLU [university], it is not the job of BIPOC to educate your students on anti-racism. Do Better." Here, she called attention to the burden and unrealistic expectation often placed on marginalized people to educate non-people of color about systemic injustices and racism. Her tweets, written in the style of a letter to them, expressed the need for her university to assume the responsibility to do the work as an institution and called on them to educate others on racial justice and other diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, to denounce the very systemic racism that they breed. Though she is uncomfortable with many of her racialized school experiences, Laura is determined to engage in activism, using social media as a tool to do so. Overall, her identity work becomes shown through writing in online spaces, such as Twitter, where she lets the world know that she should not feel uncomfortable due to race and negative racialized school experiences. The following section provides an introduction to Camila’s narrative.
Camila’s Historical and Contextual Description

After multiple requests, Camila did not provide artifacts outside of social media. However, Camila did express her intent to do so on numerous occasions but ultimately did not provide writing or any other artifacts. I also did not have the opportunity to observe Camila off of the social media platform she most frequented, Instagram. With no observations in other settings and no artifacts to draw from off of social media, I intend to shape, in part, who she is to give history and context to her case. From conversations I have had with her, here are some things that provide a better understanding of Camila.

Camila works part-time and takes Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) high school classes. She is the secretary of her high school’s Spanish club, secretary of the Spanish National Honor Society, a member of the National Honor Society for the school, and member of her high school’s club, Titan Achievers, created for students from marginalized backgrounds. Camila often expressed her love for “the Hispanic community and Dominican culture such as food, dance, music.” Aside from expressing her wish and longing to visit her home country, the Dominican Republic, Camila has dreams of becoming an architect, specifically in the residential area, after going to college for architecture.

Adding to her extracurricular activities, Camila is part of what she described as a “minority-centered club” at her high school, The Equality Club. As part of her membership, she worked with children of color at elementary schools and did other work with Black and brown communities. In the equality club, Camila and other members were free to discuss anything on their minds, contemplate current issues and how they affected her and others in the equality club. The club members supported each other, which offered Camila, other teens of color, and White students who considered themselves allies, to build relationships through discussions on race,
sexuality, and more. *The Equality Club* also serves as a place for Camila to discuss her racialized experiences as a self-described Hispanic teen.

Additionally, she received the Humanitarian award several years ago while a middle school student. However, it remains fitting as Camila wishes to improve the lived experiences of people of color, the progress of America, and the well-being of people who have been affected by racism, been denied justice and treated inequitably, but is also concerned about the well-being of all people living in our society. Through my informal conversations with Camila, a previous student of mine over four years ago, along with semi-structured interviews with her, she highlighted the importance of being vocal about the injustices of many marginalized communities, specifically Black, Latinx, or Asian. Camila, who self-identified as Hispanic and Dominican, discussed the benefits of a support system, a place to be her authentic self, and embracing a sense of community she feels from talking to other teens of color in the club, *Titan Achievers*, teen coworkers at her part-time workplace, and expressing herself to an online audience through social media spaces. In those places, Camila felt free to express her racialized experiences and the perspectives they influenced about police brutality, racism, politics, such as the strong feelings about Trump's immigration policy and issues tied to race relations she experienced in schools. Advocating for women's rights is another topic of importance to Camila, and being a young woman is another part of her identity. On her Instagram story, she reposted a message supporting women who are victims of sexual assault, spreading awareness of the importance of accepting women's use of the word "No."

Background on Camila's case is limited due to the lack of additional information I acquired from her, the lack of opportunities to observe her in offline settings, and the nature of
retrieving documents from participants during an online study. Still, I provided some context and history on this participant using the limited information available to me.

**Case Narrative**

This section highlights Camila's thematic case narrative, specifically how she enacted literacy practices on social media related to her racialized experiences, and describes how those literacies shape her identity as a Dominican and Latina. In this section, I describe the first main theme, *Dominicana to the Core* and the sub-themes, (a) *The Land is so Beautiful*, (b) *Miss Dominican Republic Universe 2020*, and (c) *Being Bilingual* to describe how Camila's online literacy practices on Instagram shows a fondness for her country, a sense of pride in her Dominican culture, and her language assets rooted in her identity as a bilingual teen.

**Theme 1: Dominicana to the Core**

Camila is very expressive about her native country, Dominican Republic, and her Dominican culture. She often adds elements of her culture into her social media presence. For example, in the bio of her Instagram, which is her most used platform, and her TikTok, in which Camila only views others' content and does not post her own, she included the text "Dominican" and "Dominicana" along with the emoji of the country's flag. In addition, she references her culture in the captions she writes. For example, in the caption of pictures of her and a friend, such as "Your favorite Latinas." She also included the emoji flag of her friend's home country, Peru, in the caption and the Dominican flag emoji. Additionally, she often adds Latin music to her Instagram stories and writes in Spanish and English when she adds commentary text to content she posts or reposts. For example, Camila added the text, “happy birthday, you are so beautiful inside and out ILY” [I love you] and then added in Spanish, “aproveite seu dia amor”, which translates to “take advantage of your day love.” Camila also included a “happy birthday”
GIF to her post. In sum, Camila includes references to her culture, identity, and her racial experiences, showing that though she is living in the Southern part of the United States, living in a majority White neighborhood, and attending a predominantly White, rural, but academically high regarded high school, she is Dominican, or as she also says, Dominicana to the core. In the next paragraph, I present the first sub-theme, *The Land is so Beautiful*, to reveal how connected Camila is to her home country, her mother's land, and the place where most of the family calls home. This relates to the theme, *Dominicana to the Core*, because it shows how much Camila's identity is centered around her culture.

**The Land is so Beautiful.** Camila reposted a video on her IG stories, a reel from a magazine Instagram account, and she added the text, “don’t live there rn [right now] but this country is so beautiful [star eyes face emoji].” In her repost of the nine-second video clip showing the beauty of the Dominican Republic, there was also the original text from the post that read, “what I mean when I say I live in the [location pin emoji] Dominican Republic.” Camila commented, “the land is so beautiful” about her post regarding her homeland. Adding her personal commentary to this post and reposting the content shapes the identity of Camila because who she is as a person, is so attached to the country where the majority of her family is, where she was raised, and where she feels most herself. Camila planned to visit; however, her mother and brother getting Covid-19 derailed what would have been the highlight of her summer. Still, Camila has an attachment to the country who, in part, is still a part of her identity as she lives in the United States; she is no less Dominican in her eyes. In the next paragraph, I focus on how Camila used Instagram to advocate for the positive representation of Latina's, specifically Dominican women.
Miss Dominican Republic Universe 2020. On her Instagram story, Camila posted a repost from Kimberly Jimenez's Instagram, a woman who identifies as Dominican and Puerto Rican, who is a model and actress and represented the Dominican Republic in the Miss Universe pageant. The woman identified as Afro-Latin, and is one of the five Afro-Latin delegates who have been crowned Miss Universe Dominican Republic. Camila added the GIF of a Dominican flag to this story post, supporting a woman she found to represent her culture positively. Adding to her admiration for the representation Kimberly added to the pageant platform, Camila found pieces of herself and her identity in Kimberly's success and found a piece of her home country. The Dominican flag continues to be used by Camila to represent her identity. This section represents the main theme, *Dominicana to the Core*, by combining the Dominican flag and someone she sees as representing her country proudly.

**Being Bilingual.** Samirah X reposted a post on her Instagram story, specifically a meme that reads, “being bilingual means double the sad songs you can cry to.” This meme, which included only text, represents Camila as she speaks Spanish and English. Representing her bilingualism, which is often regarded as prestigious, unless you are a person of color who is bilingual, she is showing how her identity is grounded somewhat in language. Camila identifies as Hispanic and speaks Spanish in and outside of her home. She jokes in this meme that her bilingualism opens her up emotionally as she listens to love and break-up songs in music sung in English and Spanish.

Similarly, Camila posted a repost on her Instagram stories from an account full of memes about Mexican culture, racialized experiences of those of Mexican descent in the United States, and the experiences of those in the Latinx community in general geared toward young people of color. The repost text read, "Being fluent in Spanish is all fun and games until you're put in a
professional setting, and all you know is Spanish del Campo." When I asked Camila to explain this post and what "Spanish del Campo" means in her third interview, she said,

I consider myself fluent in Spanish. But there's also times where I'm in a professional setting like at work, and I'm trying to spit these words out of my mouth, and I'm like uhhhhhh. Or I just say it in my language, and you know, they look at me like cross eyed like if I'm talking three different languages and I'm like, what do you want. And it's just because like every country in Latin American so the Caribbean Central America, South America, they all have their different slang of Spanish like here in the United States, like in the South they say y'all and compared to like New York and they call it like it's brick outside like it's cold outside or they just have a stronger accents just like in those Latin American countries where from the Dominican Republic, we have much more of a slang Spanish compared to like Argentina I'm pretty sure, and they have more like a formal way.

Here, Camila pointed out the unique way her culture speaks the Spanish language of her country and that being bilingual does come with its difficulties and is much more complex than it is most seen. Despite this, she is proud of her Dominican descent, even if it impacts the way she speaks Spanish, viewed as not standard, formal, or traditional Spanish, but to her, it is as having her own special dialect she shares with other Dominicans.

In sum, Camila's identity is largely tied to her ethnicity as Dominican and she boldly identifies as Latina. In our first interview, she demonstrated this, saying, "I love representing my culture; I love my Dominican culture, I love the food, I love the music, um, how my people treat each other. And I just love Dominican culture like I'm going there this summer." She went on to express her love for her identity, noting that some do not feel the same about their culture and
who they are, saying, "I actually had a friend, and they were embarrassed to be Hispanic, and I was like, how could you ever be embarrassed to be Hispanic or whatever culture you are from? I'm so proud of that. I am proud...How can you ever be embarrassed to be where you're from? I love my culture, I love my community." To follow, I present the second main theme, *My Patience Right Now for this World is Slim to Non-existent*, in Camila's narrative to describe Camila's perspectives towards injustice and racism. Here, I focus on the way her race and the race of others intersect with lived experiences through the sub-themes, (a) *You Must be Stupid*, (b) *Male Teachers in Spain had Enough too*, and (c) *Zero Tolerance for Double Standards*.

**Theme 2: My Patience Right Now for this World is Slim to Non-existent**

Camila has shown that she has no patience for how marginalized individuals are treated in the United States and will not be silent about it anymore, saying she is ready to risk her freedom to demand antiracism and social justice for people of color. For example, Camila reposted a picture of the young Mexican male teen, Ever Lopez, who recently graduated high school on her Instagram stories. He received national media attention after he wrapped Mexico's flag over his graduation robe during his graduation ceremony as he walked across the stage. The school claimed he violated the dress code and withheld his diploma. To add insult to injury, his family was escorted out of graduation instead of celebrating with them as Ever was the first high school graduate in his immediate family. She posted a picture of him with his family leaving the school, holding his diploma with one hand and his fist raised on the other hand. In response to the school's response and the evident role race plays in these situations, Camila, in our third interview, said,

My patience right now for this world is slim to non-existent…when I was like in middle school and when I was a freshman in high school; I was like you gotta like understand
people's views are and why they're being so upset, like no, if somebody tries anything with my culture or my culture or family I'm not holding back. I one don't have the time or the patience for you anymore. I only been living for 16, 17 years of this life and I'm kind of sick of it already. I am sick of knowing how people treat each other, because of your damn racism and just you know your ethnicity, like come on when we all die we're all bone, like we're all the same bone, like it's skeleton that's all we are. Like you're not going to see, oh was that person white or Black. Is that percent Hispanic, and you're not going to know if you are just looking at a skeleton...If that were to happen to me next year, I just know you're going to be seeing the living hell coming out of me. I'll probably get arrested.

Though Camila did not use TikTok to post content, she did view others' videos which increased her awareness of the injustices in society and decreased her tolerance for their occurrence. About using TikTok, she said, "I do not post, but I'm on it every day, 24/7", but goes on to reveal how she used TikTok as an informational source, saying, "pretty much I figure out everything there. I literally find out most of the things that are happening on a day-to-day basis because of TikTok." The social media platform recommended Camila videos to watch based on what she previously viewed on TikTok. For instance, she recalled watching videos about Trump, police brutality, and the attacks on the Asian, Black, and Latinx communities, "who sometimes cannot even be doing nothing wrong" from her perspective. Thus, Camila watched the racialized experiences of individuals from marginalized communities' stories on TikTok, which lessened her willingness to tolerate injustice and racism.

Extending this notion of being fed up, Camila reposted a TikTok video to her Instagram stories calling attention to a White female teacher who used TikTok to brag about taking items
away from her students of color, specifically items used by Black male youth on their hair, such as hairbrushes and durags. Camila explained that though the items should not have been out in class, the teacher was insensitive to the culture of Black hair as she boasted about confiscating the items from the youth of color. In the sub-theme, *You Must be Stupid*, I focus on how Camila reacted to others due to a lack of patience for the lack of people's concern for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the society in which she lives.

**You Must be Stupid.** Camila used her Twitter platform to express her feelings toward Trump's impact on his supporters breaching the Capitol Building. Though she has only tweeted once, she reacted in a way that shows she has no tolerance for excusing the behavior of those that are racist, promote acts of injustice, and lack the opportunity to act, and deny equitable experiences to others. Camila's tweet was a reply to a user on Twitter who tweeted in support of Trump not being responsible for inciting the blame on the US Capitol Building in response to a tweet laughing about Trump's Twitter account being suspended. Camila commented, "you must be stupid," in reply to the user supporting Trump and overlooking his responsibility. In the following paragraph, I present the second sub-theme, *Male Teachers in Spain had Enough too*, to explain how Camila encouraged others to speak up on injustices by showing her Instagram followers that people worldwide are stepping up to do so. Hence, she provided an account of the response allies took to counter negative experiences of people of color.

**Male Teachers in Spain had Enough too.** Though this post was more toward gender injustice than racial injustice, Camila found no patience for this type of injustice, relating to the overall theme, *My Patience Right Now for this World is Slim to Non-existent*. Camila posted a repost on her Instagram story of a picture of three White male teachers in Spain with the caption, "These teachers wore skirts in support of a student who was expelled for wearing one."
original post caption, in part, included the hashtag #clotheshavenogender and the text, "isn't it time to leave these outdated gender norms behind ?" as the caption. That hashtag also became spread across social media, translated in Spanish as "LaRopaNoTieneGenero," regarding the school suspension of the Latinx student suspended for wearing a dress. The male teachers were praised for advocating and stepping up to support a male teen student, Mikel Gomez. In her third interview, Camila discussed her perspectives on the teachers who came to class in skirts after their student Mikel Gomez was expelled for wearing one and forced to see a psychiatrist. They, like Camila, had enough. The racialized experiences of teens of color in school are just as important to address as their lived experiences outside of education spaces. Thus, Camila used Instagram to spread awareness of the importance of allowing teens, especially teens of color, like Mikel Gomez, to embrace their identities in schools and beyond their walls and the importance of allies to advocate for them to do just that. In the paragraph below, I highlight the final sub-theme, Zero Tolerance for Double Standards, which connects to this section's main theme, My Patience Right Now for this World is Slim to Non-existent as it pertains to Camila's capacity to accept the current state of society.

**Zero Tolerance for Double Standards.** Camila's minimal tolerance, in part, was due to the way politics often represented individuals from the Latinx community. In our first interview, Camila discussed the double standards existing within immigration, arguing that some people commit crimes in the United States, just as there are people with that intent at the border. When commenting about the way Trump portrayed individuals seeking to come to the United States, Camila stated,

some people do come in here from different countries that do harmful things. But that's not to say people living here that's not doing bad things are ready. It's a double standard
acting like the people living here are not doing bad things, but then like seeing that people are coming from a different country, it is for sure that they’re coming here to do a crime. It's just a small percentage of those intruders, in his words, are coming here to do a crime; they just come here to get a better life, like my mom she came here for a better life for me and my brother. And I have a lot of family members that are coming to the U.S. for a better life.

In sum, teens like Camila realize the numerous negative experiences tied to race in their relatively short lives, and like Camila, they are just plain sick of it, even at such a young age, which she previously pointed out. Therefore, the identity of immigrants has become negatively associated with the narrative portrayed by others. In the final theme for Camila’s narrative, *Justice Being Served*, I focused on her agency around dismantling injustices towards people of color through the two sub-themes, (a) *The Wait for Justice* and (b) *The Wait for Justice, Again.*

**Theme 3: Justice Being Served**

Camila reflected on the racialized experiences of different communities of color and often highlighted the personal experiences of Black, Latinx, and Asian individuals on her social media platform of choice, Instagram. On her Instagram stories, she often posted about the need for police reform due to the many deaths of people of color at the hands of police seeking justice to be served. She also highlighted cases in the national news where she perceived race as a factor. For example, she reposted a CNN report to her Instagram stories which was a side by side picture of former officer Derek Chauvin and George Floyd with the headline, “Derek Chavin found guilty in the death of George Floyd,” and the text, “Former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin has been convicted on all charges.” She explained her reaction in an informal conversation with me, saying, “Justice being served” in response to the verdict. Though Camila
felt justice was served, she highlighted another voice of a fellow Latina on her Instagram stories by reposting a tweet that read, “That a family had to lose a son, brother and father; that a teenage girl had to film and post a murder, that millions across the country had to organize and march just for George Floyd to be seen and valued is not justice.“ And this verdict is not a substitute for policy change.” Thus, Camila reposted content frequently that showcased her and others’ stance on controversial issues. Here, she advocated for justice towards communities of color, even though she, like many others, wished she did not have to.

In our second interview, Camila expressed that having video proof is necessary for dealing with navigating the justice system, saying, "I will always told all my friends, I guess if you have a problem you have to have proof because here in the in any justice system they won't believe you unless if you don't have any proof, you don't have any recordings any videotape any documents, saying that is it…" Her perspectives have to do with the notion that for justice to be served, especially when a White person's action towards a person of color is in question, there often needs to be some clear-cut video proof in favor of people of color. In informal conversations, Camila discussed how video proof circulated on social media helped for justice, in part, in the George Floyd case. Additionally, Camila posted about body camera footage that helped in cases where race was a factor against police brutality. Aside from posting publicly, Camila was very expressive privately in conversations with me about how race plays a role in situations of police brutality. For example, in informal conversations, Camila mentioned, "It seems like every day it just gets worse and worse, police officers who we are supposed to trust and are there [to] protect us think they have the right and authority to use force once they see someone of color." Here, Camila illustrates the need for better relationships between police officers and people of color, which she wants to happen.
With *Justice Being Served*, Camila used social media, specifically Instagram, to express the day-to-day experiences of people of color that relate to racism and acts of injustice towards them. Besides using her voice about police brutality, she used Instagram stories to spread awareness about a Mexican woman being assaulted because she was assumed to be Asian by a White male. In addition, she put out content to include awareness about big store chains, such as Target, that locked up Black beauty products for more security against theft but did not take the same security measures with products used predominantly by White people. Further, Camila's racialized content included Black Lives Matter and police officers' overwhelming use of force against people of color, thus seeking justice for victims of racism and injustice. In the following two paragraphs, I present two sub-themes that support Camila’s justice-oriented approach.

**The Wait for Justice.** Camila reposted content about the news of the former White officer Kim Potter, who argued she mistakenly grabbed her gun instead of her taser to use on a young Black male. In one post, the text read, “If a doctor uses the wrong tool and kills a patient, what are the chances they keep their job? If a pilot opened the cabin door mid flight instead of turning on the seatbelt sign, do they keep their job? But a cop can “mistakenly” grab their gun instead of a taser and keep theirs?” The second post included visual images of a picture of bread, a phone, a pack of skittles, and the text, “It’s a gun!‘ next to each picture and a final picture of a gun and the text, “It’s a taser!” in response to the Daunte Wright shooting in Minnesota. Camila joined the response seeking the justice that his family, the public, and the Black community are awaiting. Thus, Camila used her platform to bring awareness to this case centered so closely around race relations.

**The Wait for Justice, Again.** Camila reposted a news story on her Instagram stories about a young teen Mexican boy named Adam Toledo who was shot and killed by a Chicago
police officer. Camila supported charges being brought against the officer, being demanded from the Latinx community and critics of the officer. Connecting to the main theme, Camila is awaiting justice for this teen, and so are others in the public who expressed outcry of the life loss of another youth of color at the hands of police. Consequently, Camila used her Instagram profile to show that justice awaits for so many in the Latinx community. Though, as Camila seeks justice, she still questions why there is a reason to do so, saying, "It literally makes no sense; all I'm gonna keep saying is I don't understand why we're in 2021 where electric cars are being made, and we're having to face racism." In sum, *Justice Being Served* represents what Camila is advocating for, using Instagram to make this clear. Therefore, this case enacted literacies on Instagram related to the racialized experiences of Black and Latinx individuals.

**Johnavan’s Historical and Contextual Description**

Using artifacts off of social media, such as Johnavan's writing outside of Instagram, the social media platform he solely utilized, video observations of him playing basketball, videos he recorded about basketball, and informal conversations we had, I shape, in part, who he is in order to give history and context to his case. When asked to respond to what he stands for in a writing assignment for an English class, Johnavan wrote about what he believed in and what he thought was worth speaking up about. He explained, "I stand for Black lives and overall I stand for myself. I don't agree with lots of things that the general public perceives as true and i'll speak on that anytime." In the poem below, Johnavan expands on this advocacy, writing,

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I stand for black lives
The lives that are innocently killed
The lives that are hunted down by police
Like a lion hunts a buffalo
I imagine an America with no white privilege
I imagine an America where all races are treated equally
All lives matter is like saying all houses matter
When there is only one house on fire
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When will they realize
We all came from the same place
We all breathe the same air
And all of our lives hold the same value
Fear
We fear our lives
When police stop us for an illegal turn or a having a broken tail light
We fear that we will be murdered for being black
This world has been filled with racism towards all colors
But i think we have it the worse by a long shot
I stand for black lives because i’m black and i have to live as a black person
No matter how proud I am to be black, I can say that being black in America is a disadvantage

In response to an argumentative essay with the teacher-assigned prompt, is social media helpful or harmful, Johnavan wrote why he thought social media was beneficial. Specifically, he wrote about social media being helpful because of the wide range of resources available to someone to do things such as promote a business, an idea, or something you believe in, and promote yourself and who you are. Additionally, in this paper, he reflected on his personality and referenced how social media helps reserved and introverted individuals, like himself at times, with communication. Specifically, he wrote,

Another reason why social media is helpful is that it is a simple and easy way to communicate with people and make friends. On sites like Instagram, you can talk with friends and family with a click of a button. This example is especially helpful for people who are shy and have low self esteem. Chatting online is much easier than face to face interaction. This type of feature can actually help kids with low self esteem and shyness get out of their shell and open up more. Social media is also helpful for motivation for teens. There are countless pages that sole focus on motivation and positivity.

Therefore, Johnavan’s non-social media writing is helpful to help build the complete picture of who he is and how he is making sense of things regarding racialized experiences, his identity,
and social media. Aside from writing off of social media, I made virtual observations outside of social media, such as watching videos of Johnavan playing basketball alongside team members, which added to shaping who he is as a person, and the identity he assumes as a student-athlete.

It is worth noting that, although they are not part of my official data collection due to being recorded in 2017 and 2018, Johnavan uploaded two videos to his YouTube account. I draw from this content to better represent who he is, referencing them in the background and context to the case. For example, in 2017, Johnavan posted his first video on his YouTube channel, which focused on basketball dunking, the basketball video game, NBA 2K for Xbox, and telling jokes. Here, Johnavan discussed basketball, impersonated Lebron James, and incorporated comedy. Comments were turned off for this video. The other is a 15-minute YouTube video uploaded in 2018 about the top 5 NBA trades, in his opinion. It was interesting to see that Johnavan, who did not show his face during our three virtual interviews, showed his face on camera. When asked his reasons for preferring not to enable his video in a follow-up question at the end of the study, Johnavan wrote, "I just don't like to really show my face that much when it's not very necessary because I'm kinda camera shy." Still, in previous interviews, Johnavan mentioned being harassed and bullied about his race on online gaming platforms, such as X-Box Live. For instance, in our first interview, Johnavan discussed online gaming sites and the racism that occurs on those platforms. For example, Johnavan told the story of how both himself and his younger family member, another Black youth were on the receiving end of racist comments, racist jokes, and bullying while playing video games online on X-Box Live. Additionally, Johnavan spoke on how stereotyping, based on race, occurs on X-Box Live, whose users are majority White, explicitly noting, "online is a safe place for racism. Nothing can happen to people online; they say what they want to say, do what they want to do, and say things they
wouldn't say in person or in real life." He also discussed being bullied in school and his community school because of the darkness of his skin tone.

Despite this, he seemed very confident speaking in front of the camera on his YouTube videos, which is worth noting because he often appeared shy and a bit reserved in our three semi-structured interviews. Another interesting thing to mention is that he turned the comments off, not allowing responses from viewers. Though I did not use these videos as official artifacts, I find them important to show a confident Johnavan, who is showing his face to the world via social media, particularly YouTube. Since there has not been any content uploaded to his YouTube channel during the study's data collection period, April 5th to July 5th week, the videos and my observations of him playing basketball and his writing off social media are used to show who Johnavan is, how he makes sense of things, and how he solidifies his identity.

In sum, Johnavan is a unique case. He posted the least amount of content on social media, specifically Instagram, posting when he felt the urge, which was minimal. He sporadically posted on Instagram to highlight his perceptions on topics of (anti)racism, (in)equity, (in)justice and showcased his identity as an athlete, specifically a basketball player. Johnavan's identity as a future basketball player, basketball analyst, or member of a team's medical staff, such as a physical therapist, and his identity outside of basketball is also an avid gamer, playing in online gaming communities, is grounded in his lived experiences. Below, I present the case narrative to tell the story of Johnavan’s activism displayed through Instagram, paying particular attention to the online literacies enacted in this space.

**Case Narrative**

This section highlights Johnavan's case narrative through three main themes (a) *America's Double Standards on Display*, (b) *Athleticism Intersecting with Social Justice*, and (c)
The New #Black Kid in Town, to explain how he used social media literacies on Instagram related to not only his but racialized experiences of others. In the first theme, I presented three sub-themes, (a) *Come on, America*; (b) *Trump Weighs in*;  and (c) *All Buildings Matter*, to hone in on the perspectives of Johnavan, which calls out America for the racial injustices presented through a double-standard approach.

**Theme 1: America’s Double Standards on Display**

There seems to be a visible level of hypocrisy regarding the actions of Black individuals and those of White people in the United States. By definition, a double standard is "a rule or principle which is unfairly applied in different ways to different people or groups," according to definitions from Oxford Languages. When you look at America's society, there are double standards within many facets. For example, race plays a role in the inequitable treatment of people of color in workplaces, schools, policing, and their lived experiences in other varied spaces. Johnavan, with his identity as a young Black male in mind, explored his racialized experiences through calling attention to the double standards show America is and has been putting on an idea that recurs in his social media platform of choice, Instagram, in his interviews, and observations on and outside of social media. In the sub-theme that follows, I described how Johnavan enacted literacies on Instagram to call attention to his dissatisfaction with the current state of America as it relates to politics and racial unrest.

**Come on, America.** On his Instagram, Johnavan posted a series of three video clips of the infamous 2021 Capitol Building attack where he, in a voice-over style commentary, expressed his reaction to the attack on the Capitol Building from Trump supporters. His caption for the videos of CBS News special report on the breach of the Capitol Building read, “Come on, America.” In his commentary, Johnavan talked emotionally about how the attack was being
handled by law enforcement, expressed disapproval of the lack of attention from police,
criticized how majority Black organizations were policed and discussed the different experiences
of Black protestors concerning the lack of response and security involvement of the
predominantly White crowd he watched. Specifically, he remarked the following about his
stance on the different racialized experiences of protestors.

Yo, what is this? What are y'all doing? Like, come on now. What are y'all doing
America, what is this? What’s the purpose of this? Like, come on now. Y'all gotta get it
right, Y'all loss, Y'all loss, stop blaming it on these lawmakers and stop blaming it on all
these people, y'all loss, y'all can’t, like come on, get it right, y'all loss, stop fighting,
you’re having war with yourself, no one else, this is a war between Americans, all these
other countries are just laughing at us. This is chaos, this is stupid, come on now, anyone
that supports this, that’s, that’s crazy man. What are we doing bro, if this was BLM
protestors we'd be dead, we’d be dead, because we’d be injured, in jail, or locked up right
now. Like, look at this man. These police ain’t doing nothing. I’m mad. They're not doing
anything. These people can barge into the Capitol Building, Capitol Hill, White Houses,
that means they can barge into my house, they can barge into anyone's houses. Some type
of war gonna’ (going to) happen. Look at this bro. And for the five people who leave
occasionally when they protesting, I be seeing people leave and stuff. 10 more people
come, 20 more people come, this is not gonna’ stop. It’s a six pm curfew. They are not
going to listen to this. Get it together bro, I’m scared for my life right now. I am not even
joking. This is not right. This is not right bro. This is not right. What are we doing right
now? Where the national guard at? Huh? Where is the national guard? If this was Black
Lives Matter protesters, like I just said, the National Guard would already be here. Where
is the National Guard? Y'all just sitting there, y'all letting this happen, ya’ll letting this happen man, y'all not doing nothing. You're sitting here, Come on now.

In our first interview, Johnavan discussed the context of the Capitol Building attack post, stating, "I was listening to it the whole day...I was like, I'm just going to record. I obviously had like strong feelings about it being, you know, clearly wrong...so I just did it. I didn't think I was going to post it. I posted it either the next day, or like a few hours after that..." Here he recorded a video response speaking about the differences in the treatment of Trump supporters and supporters of Black Lives Matter. Additionally, he used social media, specifically Instagram, to discuss the injustices towards Black individuals and call attention to White privilege and inequality. In addition, Johnavan discussed his desire to use his voice more actively on social media, specifically Instagram, noting in our first interview, "as my following grows and stuff, I probably would post more of that kind of stuff because I already talk about that stuff you know in real life, and I have like conversations with other people like friends and family and stuff....It's just I haven't posted about a lot, but yeah, if I start growing like a following, then I'll definitely post more and use my platform."

Adding to the race-infused perspectives, he expanded his claim that White privilege impacted the handling of the Capitol attack on his Instagram stories by posting text circulating at the time that read, "we're not asking you to shoot them like you shoot us, we're asking you to not shoot us like you don't shoot them." While his central point was to communicate how if people of color were involved, they would have different experiences with an attack on the Capitol Building than the predominantly White crowd. Johnavan also reflected on his identity as a Black male and references how he is "scared for his life" regarding rioters' ability to come into other's homes if they could attack the Capitol Building without an overwhelming response of the police
or National Guard. Furthering the notion of America's double standards on display, Johnavan reposted a cartoon illustration of two police officers arresting a Black male while a heavily armed White male walked by freely. This cartoon depiction was in response to the White male teen shooter in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Kyle Rittenhouse, who was accused of killing Black Lives Matter protesters, which he was ultimately acquitted for as killings were justified as self-defense. Johnavan added the text "terrible" and posted it to his Instagram stories. In these Instagram posts, Johnavan used various multimodal literacies such as written captions and comments, text added to visuals, video clips, and audio voice-over to narrate his perceptions of racialized experiences.

**Trump Weighs in.** As Johnavan reflected on experiences where he perceived race playing a critical role in the response, such as the US Capitol attack or Black Lives Matter protests, he used his Instagram platform as a place to voice his reactions. For example, Johnavan emphasized the different rhetoric used when former President, Donald Trump, responded to Black Lives Matter protests versus his supporters' attempted breach of the Capitol Building by posting a picture on his stories of two signs. One read, "when the looting starts, the shooting starts" and other read, "Go home, We love you. You're very special. [...] I know how you feel." As the two statements, which portray two very different tones, depict messages from the then commander in chief, Johnavan discerned race played a part in Trump's response. For example, Trump's intended message to Black individuals and supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement was a warning filled with the threat of deadly police response. However, his dialogue shifted when the audience changed. Weighing into a majority White nationalist audience, bought about a response that embraced the people and almost overlooked their actions. Here, double standards are front and center and have an underlying message of racism. For example, the
wording used, the purpose of the messages, and the political nature are all influenced to some extent by race, something Johnavan observed and felt compelled to show in his stories.

In the last sub-theme that follows, I provide an outlook on how America’s Double Standards can influence thinking and rhetoric that diminishes the urgency of centering the justice efforts for people of color. In the paragraph below, I showed how Johnavan used social media, specifically Instagram, to respond to language that overlooks the need for racial justice.

All Buildings Matter. Johnavan responded to the counter rhetoric of the Black Lives Matter movement. ”All Lives Matter” is used by many Americans to criticize the former. On his Instagram stories, Johnavan posted a picture of the New York City skyline where the World Trade Center, known as the Twin Towers, used to be located. He added the text, ”All Buildings Matter” on one line and included a second line of text that read, "*IK (I know) this gonna get some hate." By calling attention to All Lives Matter, Johnavan associated the conversation surrounding the need to highlight the message that Black lives matter, as well as the lives of others. His post also showcased his perspective by offering another way for individuals to reflect on how the rebuttal sounds when applied to a non-race example. Due to the double standards grounded in race present in this country, there is a need for conversations to center around communities of color, specifically Blacks, who demand an end to racism and inequity. In Johnavan, and many other Blacks' eyes, all lives will not matter until Black Lives Matter as well. Johnavan used Instagram to bring attention to the country’s double standards, emphasized how Black people's experiences matter, and called attention to the need for Black people to be seen, valued, and heard. The following section introduces the second central theme in Johnavan’s narrative, Athleticism Intersecting with Social Justice. This theme identifies how Johnavan’s
activism intersects with his identity as an athlete and indicates how race, particularly his 
blackness, encompassed it all.

**Theme 2: Athleticism Intersecting with Social Justice**

Johnavan highlighted the importance of merging his identity as an athlete, specifically a 
basketball player, with his desire to call attention to the Black Lives Matter movement, much like 
how the NBA intersected the two. Johnavan envisions himself in the professional basketball field 
and intends to bring awareness to racism, systemic injustice, and the inequitable lived 
experiences of Black people. To him, intersecting two important things is not required for 
everyone but for those who feel moved. Despite having goals to intersect the world of athleticism 
and justice for Black people, Johnavan considered the reactions from society from people who 
are against professional athletes using their voice to call for justice for the Black community. For 
example, Johnavan spoke about Lebron James, in our second interview, saying, "he got a lot of 
hate from people when um talking about like. The NBA is getting too political, or you know, 
focus on basketball just play basketball like that, but I think he just doesn't care, he's going to 
speak out whenever he wants to, and I like it. People just really don't like him speaking out or 
anyone in the NBA speaking out." Thus, Johnavan is well aware of the possible backlash in 
crossing worlds of athletics with antiracism, socially just, and equitable treatment of Blacks. In 
sum, this theme speaks to the racialized experiences of athletes like Johnavan, and those in the 
professional sports world, mainly pointing to how intersections of race and the fight for social 
justice get played out in a predominantly Black organization, like the NBA, where players are in 
the position to use their voice to advocate for social justice, doing so by tackling issues that take 
place in the communities they come from. To follow, I present two sub-themes, (a) *Ball is Life: 
#athlete #hooper* and (b) *O'er the Land of the Free* to discuss how Johnavan used Instagram to
engage in literacies tied to his identity as a basketball player and advocate for freedom and liberation for people of color in today's society, specifically for Black people.

**Ball is Life: #athlete #hooper.** To show his personal experience as an athlete, Johnavan posted a thread of pictures on his Instagram feed that highlighted practicing basketball skills. The multimodal post included several pictures of him working out in the gym and the caption, "Late night GRIND session" with the brown arm, fire, basketball, the 100 emoji, and the caption, "EVERYDAY IS A NEW DAY TO BE GREAT." In his second interview, Johnavan explained how his workout picture represents him, saying, "because I'm in the gym and I'm flexing it represents my identity because it has something to do with exercising and being an athlete, which is me working out and that's pretty much my identity as a student-athlete or an athlete." To Johnavan, basketball is a large part of his life, but so is speaking up for injustices towards Black people, which is why he adopted the stance, "More than an Athlete," a slogan coined by Lebron James to represent having an identity outside of basketball and in response to criticism for having a voice on social justice issues. More than an athlete speaks back to critics of professional athletes who think they should only discuss basketball and embrace using their position and platform to engage in social justice work. Johnavan lives by the motto, more than an athlete, saying, "to me, it means that I'm not just a basketball player. When people see a ballplayer, especially one who is Black, they stereotype us, thinking that we're just dumb jocks that can only play ball. Though in reality we can get good grades and do everything that everyone else can do, people just don't see that or more likely don't want to see that." Here, Johnavan speaks to the multiple layers of his identity.

Adding to the intersection between his identity as an athlete and his social media activism to stand up for social justice, Johnavan expressed the desire to post more things around social
justice when he gets a more extensive Instagram following. Similar to an athlete he admires, Lebron James, who is notorious for using his voice on and off social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter to express his viewpoints on racism, police brutality, inequity, and the need for social justice for people of color. For Johnavan, he plans to use his platform as an athlete to grow his social media following to use his voice to reach many people, saying his content would include,

A lot about obviously basketball and then a lot about inequity, race, racial stuff, social injustice, because the more followers you have the more people listen. Like that's why Lebron James uses his platform and he knows that he has so many fans that are going to listen to them, from different cultures and different countries, all that stuff. If I grow to a bigger following, then the stuff I post will get more gains and stuff.

By doing so, Johnavan is creating the identity of an athlete online, specifically a Black teen athlete who intersects athleticism and social justice efforts. To express this, he discussed his vision for his Instagram feed in our first interview; specifically, he commented on how he is "trying to like have my page like to be more about like basketball and working out like cause you know, that is what I want to do." Thus, the two photos and accompanying captions Johnavan posted on his Instagram feed shaped his identity as an athlete, more specifically, what he calls, a hooper. Additionally, Johnavan's life experiences related to basketball are interwoven with his identity as a Black male as his stance, "Ball is Life," is met with his desire to be a voice for justice for the Black community. In the next section, I present the last sub-theme for Johnavan's narrative, O'er the Land of the Free to describe how he advocated for Blacks to have the same levels of freedom in America for those who are not marginalized. Here, I hone in on how important freedom of speech is to Johnavan as a young Black male in society.
Johnavan incorporated basketball and his identity as an athlete into his Instagram profile. He did so by including basketball players, such as Miami Heat’s Tyler Herro and Atlanta Hawks Trae Young as his profile picture, text in his bio, such as #athlete, #hooper, or Summer of Separation, referring to honing in on his basketball skills during the summer to separate himself in technique from others, and pictures of himself training. Coupled with his identity as an athlete, his identity as a Black athlete is, more specifically, shaping his identity. Further, Johnavan used his Instagram profile to connect his personal athletic experiences to his experiences as a fan of professional basketball. For instance, in our second interview, when asked about his thoughts on the NBA approach to the Black Lives Matter movement in the 2020 bubble season, he responded, “it was great that the NBA supported it and stuff and all the athletes supported it, and they always wore like black lives matter shirts and stuff. I would definitely do that.” When asked in the same interview if he would actively express his support for Black lives if he was a professional athlete, he responded, “yeah, I would. I would definitely do it; I think I would be, you know, if I was in the nba, I would definitely speak out a lot, um you know, tweet about it a lot, post about it a lot to get the point across and stuff. You know, encourage other you know professional athletes to do it.” Additionally, Johnavan expressed his thoughts on people who say keep politics and social justice issues out of sports by stating in our second interview,

If your local, just average Joe can talk about it, why can't they? I mean, just because they have a higher platform to talk about it doesn't mean it's any more wrong than anyone else talking about it. Some of my friends talk about politics; no one cares. Adults talk about it. People who have nothing to do with politics talk about it. Honestly, I think it's because it's more of the Black people talking about it, and that's why they just don't want to listen,
or they think it's that they don't know about politics to where they can't speak on it. When those same people don't really know much about politics, yet they speak on it, you know. Here, he pointed out how he perceived race to influence what individuals should be commenting on in relation to professional basketball players, who are majority Black. Johnavan's identity as a Black athlete and his viewpoints about Blacks in professional sports shows he expresses his viewpoints beyond his personal experience as an athlete and provides his perspectives on Black professional athletes in America, based on their racialized experiences. In the paragraph that follows, I introduce the final theme in Johnavan’s case narrative, *The New #Black kid in Town*, to highlight the influence of race in Johnavan’s lived experiences, which play out through his social media literacies.

**Theme 3: The New #Black Kid in Town**

Johnavan, not too long ago, traded in the label of the new kid in town to take his place as a member of his predominantly White community, both his school and in his neighborhood, after a long two-year period. Race, in Johnavan's perspective, affected the ease of this transition. Being new to a neighborhood or school is hard enough; adding the layer of being Black in these predominantly White settings caused Johnavan to take longer to feel welcomed and a sense of belonging. Often, neighborhoods and schools are considered "good" when they are less diverse, have little to no people of color, such as Blacks, and are predominantly White. Because of this way of thinking, Johnavan and his family's presence in a new middle to upper-middle-class town and his school experiences were situated in race relations. In the two sections below, I focus on two sub-themes, (a) #Brooktownfarm Community and (b) Racial Slurs in A+ Schools to show how his blackness, in other words, his race set him apart from just being new in his home and school communities.
#Brooktownfarm Community. Johnavan has become engaged in his new neighborhood while embracing new activities such as community-organized yard sales and experiences. On his Instagram story, Johnavan posted a picture of cash with the text, “Yard Sale Bread,” with two laughing face emojis. He also included the hashtag #Brooktownfarm (pseudonym). This post highlighted a positive experience Johnavan had during a community event. In our third interview, Johnavan discussed his move to the small middle to upper-middle-class community, which neighbors and mimics his predominantly White middle school demographics. He shared how his racialized experiences as a Black male teen in the neighborhood ranged from being the new Black kid in town to being part of the community. The money he made from the yard sale he posted represents the sense of belonging and support from a community that once othered him. To follow, the sub-theme, Racial Slurs in A+ Schools, showcased the negative schooling experiences connected to his race that Johnavan was subjected to in a prestigious, majority White middle school with a highly regarded academic reputation due to the schools’ success with high-stakes testing.

Racial Slurs in A+ Schools. Johnavan has had both positive experiences as the new kid in school, where the student population is 70 percent, White. For example, in his third interview, Johnavan discussed how he did not experience racism while playing basketball for his predominantly White middle school team. He was considered an asset on the basketball team and was one of a few Black players; nevertheless, he did experience racism off the court at the school. Johnavan recounted a racialized experience in our second interview, stating, "In sixth grade, like the first week, I had transferred to MMS. um there's a guy who was asking for the N-word pass for me from me for like pretty much the whole week and then like that, last Friday, he said that he had got it and he started, you know, saying the N-word with the er over and over
again, while we were in like the lunch line, and so, once I got to the teacher, I just told the teacher, and I think he got suspended for a few days." Though test scores at this school are far above the state average, and the school’s report card is an A, the experience of racial slurs impacted Johnavan's academic experience negatively. Johnavan's racialized experiences are similar to professional athletes celebrated for what they can do on the court but deal with racism outside of the court. Being supported when others benefit from you gives a sense of false community, which Johnavan experienced. In his third interview, he commented, "school does not give me any inspiration or anything like that. I think that's just on my own or from my family members, experiences and stuff like that" when discussing if his school gives him a sense of being able to be the change he wishes to see in the world, something an A+ school, ultimately failed at. Overall, Johnavan’s racially-infused encounters provided him with positive and negative experiences of being The New #Black Kid in Town, as he navigated his living in a society where his strongest identity marker, his blackness, steered his identity.

Chapter Summary

In sum, this chapter presented six individual case narratives from a thematic organization of teens' case studies, including themes and broadened sub-themes within their cases. More specifically, this chapter highlighted how this study's six cases engaged in enacting literacy practices in various social media spaces related to their racialized experiences and those of others and provided individual perspectives of revealing social media literacies that spoke to the identities of each case, using their online literacy practices as windows into their lives. The next chapter focuses on understanding the similar, different, and conflicting ways that all of the cases used social media literacies as a way to make sense of the intersections of their identities, engage
in activism, action, and allyship, and reimagine their society by rewriting the law of the land, a new framework of government.
CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS FROM PHASE TWO: A THEMATIC CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

OF BLACK AND BROWN TEENS’ LITERACIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It's [the injustices of Black and Brown people in society] being more portrayed on social media. People are being more informed of what's happening. If it wasn't for social media, the Black Lives Movement that happened last June wasn't gonna happen without social media because that [movement] was born by people on social media, by people on Instagram, that was like the main page, everybody was posting all these injustices that happen to like George Floyd and others. So I feel like it's [social media] been a very great tool to use. - Camila

In the quote above, Camila speaks about social media's timely impact on her learning about the recent and current injustices of marginalized people, specifically Black and Latinx individuals in today's society. Like Camila, other teens in the study engaged with literacies that fostered a collective sense of activism online. It is interesting and worth noting that Johnavan stands out a lot because he posts the least on social media out of the other cases; having the smallest amount of content allows his literacy practices to stand out a lot more. In addition, he stands out a lot generally due to being the only male in the study. Hence, phase two of the findings capture the shared yet unique experiences of how the six minoritized teens in this study collectively enacted language practices in social media spaces to highlight their advocacy efforts towards enacting social change and social justice. Narratives of individual teens' were the basis for developing the study's cross-case themes. Therefore, I analyzed how teens' narratives overlap and their commonalities, using it to create broad cross-case themes. In this chapter, the cross-case analysis answers the question: How do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences, and How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth? The cross-case analysis highlights how my findings contribute to how youth
used social media literacies to advocate for social justice, which included how they engaged in (a) making sense of the intersections of marginalized identities in social media spaces; (b) activism, action, and allyship through social media literacy; (c) and reimagining the society they lived in and a new framework of government through social media literacies (Table 5). Hence, this cross-case reveals the similar, different, and contradictory, also known as conflicting ways that teens in this study used social media to advocate for social justice.

Table 5. Thematic Table for Cross-Case Analysis

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**Theme 1: More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces**

The first theme in the cross-case analysis is *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*. This theme title was derived because the teens in this study embodied the complex nature of teens' intersections through online literacies. Social media platforms afforded teens an outlet for enacting literacy practices related to their racialized experiences, highlighting different modes of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989) within historically
marginalized groups. For example, the complicated nature of teens' intersections on social media include race and gender, race and sexuality, race and age, race and language, race and nationality, race and class, and race and education, enacted by minoritized youth in shared and unique ways. Thus the title, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens' Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*, speaks to how teens' engagement on social media shapes the intersections of marginalized teens' identities in social media spaces. Through their literacy practices on social media, teens shared what it means to be part of multiple non-dominant groups within race, class, gender [identity], sexuality, language, nationality of parents, and age [teens], each situated as barriers to equity and justice. For example, being a Black woman who is also a member of the LGBTQIA+ community creates layers of multiple marginalization. Doing so, teens speak to the importance of highlighting the experiences of people of color, all the experiences, not just the ones grounded in race, but seeing all the identities of youth of color, even the ones hidden behind the dominance of their Blackness.

Additionally, teens in the study illustrated that the intersection of their varying identities influences the context and degree to which they experience marginalization. Extending beyond their racialized experiences, teens' used social media to express how they are situated in society, taking into account how intersecting identities impact them through a collective lens. Thus, by seeking to understand teens' identity dynamics outside of the individual identity group of race, this theme continues the conversation grounded in race to understand how Black and Latinx youth put other social identities on display. Here, literacy practices on social media uncover how teens' multiple identities overlap and intersect between the individual identity groups they belong to. Hence, teens' are members of multiple historically marginalized groups, which shapes their identities as Black and Latinx youth. However, these multiple intersecting memberships yield
interlocking forms of discrimination and further perpetuate complicated experiences for the already marginalized.

Adding to this, teens’ in this study illustrated that their identities are not compartmentalized to their race alone, and by doing so, they broaden the ways their experiences impact who they are and how others treat them. By utilizing various social media platforms to enact their identities, they acknowledge the dynamics of co-existing identities, experiencing marginalization through intersectionality, and combining social and political identities. Therefore, this section will explore the similarities, differences, and conundrums, such as problems and uncertainties, of understanding how Black and Latinx youth multiple identities, situated outside of race, are conveyed through social media to embrace their whole selves. In sum, Black and Brown youth highlight their multifaceted identities, expressing who they are as whole individuals further marginalize them across social identities.

To illustrate this theme further, I provided hashtags below used on various social media platforms by Black and Latinx youth in the study. Including them here brings attention to student voices showing how teens used hashtags as a form of literacy to present themselves as having multiple layers of intersectionality (i.e., race, gender identity, sexuality, age, language, nationality, class, and education) and how they contribute in more ways than just through discussing race to the social issues climate of social media spaces.

#intersectionalclimatejustice, #climatejusticenow, #intersectionalenviornmentalism, #intersectionaleviornmentalist, #liberationnow, #thefututreisintersectional, #LGBTQ+, #LGBTQightsarehumanrights, #Pride21, #inclusion, #diversity, #racialjustice #systemicracism, #uproot the system, #blackgirlmagic, #blackqueens, #blackwomenrock, #darkskinwomen, #blackgirlskillingit, #womenownedbusiness, #kamalaharris, #obamaforevermypresident, #OBAMADAYJUNE14, #BLMatSLU, #TeenTeacher,#NeverTooYoung, #FluentinFrench
This theme, *More Than Race Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*, explores how the collective cases in this study enacted literacy practices within and on social media to highlight (1) co-existing identities of people of color; (2) further marginalization due to intersectionality experiences; and (3) the combination of social and political identities; which in return, shape the identities of Black and Latinx teens.

**Co-existing Identities**

All six case studies enacted literacy practices on social media related to more than their racialized experiences. They centered their experiences on the intersections of their identities in ways that shaped their co-existing identities. The four Black and two Latinx youth co-existing identities were highlighted as they posted content grounded in their experiences related to gender, age, class, and education. They enacted *More Than Race* by exposing the interconnectedness of their marginalization. For example, two teens, Dakarai and Tatum, social media activity encompassed marginalization through sexuality and gender identity. The other teens, Laura and Camila, intersected their racial identities with language and nationality. Also, four of the six teens, namely Camila, Laura, Samirah X, and Johnavan, intersected their co-existing identities as Black teens in predominantly White schools. Moreover, all youth used social media to characterize being a young person of color while holding other co-existing identities, which often assist with their marginalization by society. For instance, Tatum identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community first, then as a Black woman second, further validating the theme, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*, and highlighting all the identities youth take on, which intersects and sometimes take precedence, like in this case, over their race.
Even though all six youth enacted literacies beyond race through attention to the coexisting identities of Black and Latinx people, Laura stood out in the content of the information she shared on Instagram because her posts employed coexisting identities differently than the other five cases. For example, Laura showcased *More Than Race* by speaking to coexisting identities of people of color by sharing information that included actionable things. Specifically, she informed people in the social media community about actions they could take immediately, such as what they can do in their local communities or with local organizations, how they could get involved virtually or in person, and how listening and getting involved helps them stand in solidarity with Black or Latinx members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Another case that stood out regarding how teens used social media to highlight coexisting identities is through the type of literacies enacted. Specifically, one case used humor, traditional print literacy, and elements of multimodal literacy to call attention to identities grounded in race and education. Dakarai reposted a timely Instagram story that featured a graphic novel, including multimodal features such as pictures with speech boxes, and a link to the original post which showed a character labeled as "Republicans" and a text box that said, "schools teaching literally anything about the actual history of the United States," and then a text box which read, "Is this Critical Race Theory?" The co-existing identities of race and education presented Dakarai with content to use on social media to highlight marginalized teens' experiences with *More Than Race*. Within this sub-theme, Dakarai's literacy practices enacted co-existing identities differently than the others due to her use of humor, comics, political cartoons, and elements of satire.

Furthermore, one conflict in how teens embraced co-existing identities includes how one teen, Johnavan, intersected athleticism, a unique part of his identity, with his racialized
experiences to enact social justice efforts in social media spaces. By conflict, I am referring to the contractions and problems presented through data analysis, in other words, a disagreement between a participant's actions and what is presented through their engagement, practices, and content on social media. For example, Johnavan used athletics to describe who he is; however, he did so in ways that directly related to his race. In some ways, this appears to perpetuate stereotypical notions since, in society, Black males are overwhelmingly linked to being athletic because of their race. Therefore, the contradiction here is that I did not see evidence of Johnavan tying his identity as an athlete to aspects beyond More Than Race, which contrasts with the idea of intersectionality and co-existing identities. Contradictions refer to inconsistent and conflicting, opposing places that counter each other or serve as a rebuttal. To clarify, Johnavan's social media literacies show that he holds race as the most dominant sociocultural factor, even though others like his gender, middle-class socioeconomic status impact who he is as a person. Thus, his online literacies point to the ways his race dominates other identities. Specifically, teens of color have multiple layers to who they are; however, their race is often seen as the most prevalent identity and the most seen in today's society, no matter how many other identities are present.

**Experiencing Marginalization Through Intersectionality**

All of the six case studies used social media to bring awareness to the marginalization experienced by people of color within their intersecting identities. They enact literacies tied to different modes of discrimination within historically marginalized groups present within the intersectionality of Black and Brown teens' identities. They do so by sharing their perspectives about how their identities intersect in ways that further marginalize them. For example, Samirah X, a swimmer on a predominately White team and a recent graduate of a Catholic middle school with a predominantly White and Latinx student population, and now a student at a performing
arts high school outside of her home neighborhood, often posts about issues of classism. She intersected education, class, and race to consider how her experiences reflected systemic marginalization. Furthermore, she used social media to reflect on her lived experiences growing up in Southside Chicago and the need to go beyond it to explore other parts of who she is as a swimmer and an actor.

Moreover, all teens made it clear through their engagement on social media that it was more than race that represented who they were and how the world sees them. For example, experiencing marginalization through intersectionality is shown by Laura on Instagram in a post that read, "Intersectionality is the future." The caption discussed intersectionality between race and sexuality. It highlighted the Trans community and the Black Trans women at the forefront of the LGBTQIA+ community and included hashtags such as #intersectionalenvironmentalism, #intersectionaleviornmentalist, #liberationnow, #thefututreisintersectional, #LGBTQrightsarehumanrights, and #Pride21, which are highlighted above in the introduction of the theme, More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces. Similarly, Laura posted a repost on her Instagram, which featured a picture of people participating in a pride parade with the text, "Important Black and Latina Leaders of the LGBTQ+ Movement." Here, Laura intersects race and sexual orientation and highlights how minoritized people, more specifically people of color, influenced the LGBTQIA+ movement.

One case, Dakarai, in particular, stands out, as she used social media to highlight diversity beyond race, speaking to the ways sexuality, gender identity, disabilities, and languages. She creates art and shares it on social media in various modes that share stories in any way she can, whether through writing, podcasts, dance, or videos. Dakarai embodies More Than Race as she makes others aware of the experiences of marginalized teens’ intersectionality. Thus,
Dakarai brings intersectionality to her goals of representing people of color in books, T.V., film, and every facet of society. To do so, she goes beyond race and discusses the marginalization of teens of color by using social media to make others aware of the need for representation across intersectionalities of race with sexuality, disability, and gender identity. Without efforts like these, Black and Latinx youth experience marginalization and lack representation in various inclusive spaces.

Hence, More than Race is where teens think about how their experiences and the experiences of other marginalized people and their interrelated identities affect who they are and how they are treated in society. Within this subtheme, experiencing marginalization through intersectionality, teens can consider how society maintains marginalization, using people of colors’ interlocking identities as a means for more discrimination; however, it provides them with tools for overcoming issues centered on race and more.

Combining Social and Political Identities

Four out of the six case studies combine social and political identities to show society that there is more to people of color marginalization than the obvious, their race, enacting literacy practices on social media that speak to the intersectionality of their lived experiences and their perspectives as Black and Latinx teens who are complex individuals. Dakarai, Samirah X, Laura, and Johnavan center their unique and collective experiences regarding how multiple identities of youth of color intersect with Black Lives Matter. For instance, they extend content past race by highlighting how they support the Black Lives Matter movement while calling attention to other social and political identities. For example, they use social media to share how sometimes marginalized people marginalize others. One example is intersecting being Black and part of the LGBTQIA+ community. For instance, Dakarai wrote about gender-fluid fashion that
spoke to the LGBTQIA+ community and the independence, individual expression, and acceptance of fluid people of color. She shared it as a repost on her Instagram stories to her Instagram page focused on young black creators and entrepreneurs, where she highlights what Black creators are doing. Here, Dakarai supports more than just people of color, but marginalized communities within Black and Brown communities such as the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically people who are gender non-conforming, gender fluid, and other various identities of marginalized and minoritized people. These four teens enact *More than Race* by encouraging conversations about the intersectionality of marginalized teens and using social media in ways that depict varying kinds of marginalized people. For example, supporting people of color with multiple social and political identities was showcased on social media as teens' enacted literacies that uplifted LGBTQIA+ people of color, Trans women, and victims of police brutality that fall in lower socio-economic statuses. They also used social media to speak to the privileges some young people have due to intersections, such as being White and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The other two teens in this study, Tatum and Camila, used social media to highlight marginalization beyond race by focusing on the trauma associated with the identities of being a woman. With this in mind, these cases merge social and political identities in ways that call attention to women's physical and sexual abuse. In addition, they enact practices that show how race intersects with sexuality and gender identity, specifically when Black and Latinx women are marginalized and victimized. Here, these three teens spoke to the government systems that continue to be used to marginalize women, specifically Black women. For example, Camila posted a message to her Instagram stories supporting women who are victims of sexual violence and expressed her support of the use of the word "NO." Also, Tatum retweeted wanting "women
to stop centering their identity around how men perceive them." She also often retweeted in support of women, retweeting, "Sis this generation ain't sweeping pedophile men under rug. We holding these mfs accountable and letting our daughters express themselves" with a speaking face emoji. Thus, these teens' engagement on social media sheds light on the marginalization across intersectionality, as they acknowledge marginalized communities across intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

One case, Laura, in particular, stood out because her dreams and ambitions are centered on her social and political (Crenshaw, 1989) identities. For example, Laura wants to go to law school and is majoring in political science. She regularly used social media to display her social and political identities, often tweeting or retweeting about things outside of race, supporting intersectionality among her identities. For instance, on her Twitter, Laura retweeted a tweet from Cori Bush, a Democrat US Representative, which read, "We know what our own freedom looks like. End the slavery permitted under the 13th amendment. End the War on Drugs. End police violence. End health care, housing, and education apartheid. WE are the experts on our own liberation. And we won't stop until it's won." She screenshotted this tweet and reposted it on her Instagram stories, highlighting the intersections between race and class and education. Aside from this, Laura also tweeted posts about the climate crisis, climate change, and how society is seeing its effects right now, which is extremely important to Laura. She stands out in the study as being the only teen using social media in a way that intersects race with climate justice and environmentalism, class, education, and social justice. She also incorporates sexuality, gender identity, nationality, and language through her engagement on social media. Thus, there is evidence of intersectionality throughout Laura's online presence in her experiences and the experiences of those she highlights. For example, Laura reposted a mutual aid fund request,
which featured a trans-Latinx woman who needed help with car repairs and a link to her Go Fund Me on her Instagram, speaking to intersections of race and sexuality/gender identity. Further, Laura, a self-proclaimed environmentalist, reposted a video to her Instagram stories created by someone who identified as a "queer brown vegan," a youth situating themselves within multiple identities, about the environmental impact of fireworks and how those who live in low-income communities are impacted the most, bringing intersectionalities of race and class.

A contradictory way that one of my cases, Johnavan, used social media is to explain how society marginalizes teens of color like himself beyond their racial identity. Johnavan’s experiences highlighted on social media show the social and political intersections that further marginalize him and place him in privileged positions. For example, Johnavan’s content on social media portrays him as young, on top of being Black, which opens him to discrimination and as a middle-class to upper-middle-class male, creating a sense of privilege. Thus, shown through the intersections of race and age and the intersection of gender identity, sexuality, class, and education, Johnavan showcases how unique his experiences are. These layered identities serve as a way to think about teens of color with more than race in mind.

More specifically, Johnavan is a Black male teen who attended a predominantly White middle school, and now he is enrolled in a small private Christian high school. He lives in a predominately White middle to upper-middle-class neighborhood located in a private community in the suburbs. Johnavan posted a picture of the money he made from his community’s yard sale on his Instagram stories, with the caption, “yard sale bread.” Bread, in the Black community, is a common slang word for money. In an informal conversation with me, he mentioned he felt he could have made more money, but some people in the neighborhood did not participate at his table, though they visited others. Describing this racialized experience, he mentioned his family
was the only Black family participating in the community yard sale. The community in which Johnavan lives supports the middle-class notions of a yard sale, and his economic status allows him to fit; however, his Blackness, which intersects with his class, still marginalizes him, showing that race is the dominant factor. As the only Black male in the study or male in general, Johnavan has a privilege that other teens in the study do not have; his gender; however, in contradiction, as a Black male, this added level of race serves as a way intersectionality marginalizes him. His race works to marginalize a dominant identity, his maleness. Through his literacy engagement on social media, it is clear that although his socio-economic status and maleness privilege him, his race, specifically his Blackness, does the opposite, shown in the racialized content of his social media practices. Adding to this discussion, contradictions in this sub-theme relate to the intersections of Johnavans' various identities that influence how he encounters small portions of power related to class and gender and significant levels of marginalization related to his race in his lived experiences. For instance, Johnavan's multiple non-dominant identities (i.e., race, age) intersect in a way that causes discrimination, and his dominant identities (i.e., cisgender, male, class, education) yield certain privileges. Here, power dynamics exist when combining social and political identities.

In sum, the first theme in my cross-case analysis, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens' Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*, explored the similarities, differences, and contradictory ways that all of my cases used social media as a way to highlight the intersections of social issues such as race, class, gender identity, sexuality, language, etc., impact their lived experiences and further marginalize people of color. Further, this theme sought to explain the multifaceted identities of people of color and how marginalized people are subjected to many different forms of discrimination. Here, teens show through their literacies online that
intersectionality is present in the experiences of young people of color. In addition, they also reveal how youth of color intersectional identities cause interlocking forms of discrimination, shown through their literacy practices on social media. Also, teens’ activity on social media platforms is anchored in their varying identities, which shows how it is important to see all identities of youth of color. Here, teens combine social and political identities to show that people of color are marginalized in far more ways than just race. By bringing attention to the idea of intersectional LGBTQIA+, the experiences of young LGBTQIA+ people of color, and providing awareness of multiple identities, for example, the need to see all identities of LGBTQIA+ youth of color literacy practices in social media spaces, bring More Than Race to the forefront.

**Theme 2: Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements**

The second theme in this cross-case analysis is Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements. The theme title was derived from the teens’ practices in social media platforms in response to their and the racialized experiences of others. Collectively, they enacted practices rooted in acts of activism and allyship, adding to various movements with social justice aims and efforts. Thus, I named this theme Activism, Action, and Allyship because it represents how Black and Latinx youth identities (i.e., racial identities, literacy identities, advocate identities) were grounded in being active through on and offline spaces and contexts (i.e., social media platforms, within communities) that allow them to seek equity, justice-oriented, and anti-racism. Within this theme, I explored how teens’ practices on social media position them as people, who collectively want to engage in activism, allyship, and be active agents of change and how their literacy practices within the context of
social media shape their identities as change-makers as they post, upload, and tweet for justice. Here, youth, through their literacy practices online, become champions of equity and antiracism who advocate for justice for the marginalized. They also enact identities as champions of marginalized people's lives.

In terms of the literacy practices and teens' identities pointing to advocacy, all the teens in the study advocate for justice and support for people of color, and beyond this call, including other forms of advocacy such as environmental justice, climate advocacy, and international justice through Laura (#climatejustice, #climatejusticenow, #environmentaljustice, #FreePalestine, #ProtectJewishLives) and the LGBTQIA+ community advocacy efforts shown through Laura, Tatum and Dakarai (#LGBTQRightsAreHumanRights, #LiberationNow, #Pride, #Pride21, #Pride2021, #LGBTQ+). Thus, teens employed Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens' Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements within several socially infused contexts (i.e., gender identities, sexuality, geography, etc.) impacting marginalized people, though this theme will primarily center on how they enacted activism and allyship for racial justice. Hence, this theme explains that youth are enacting literacies by being active through their social media content. This content is associated with activism and allyship within social issues that lead them to advocate for justice and call attention to the experiences of minoritized people grounded in race and the fight against bigotry and hatred.

In this cross-case analysis, I discuss the similarities, differences, and contradictory ways that all of my cases used social media to engage in activism, take action and provide allyship to the marginalized while contributing to current social justice movements. Specifically, youth in this study used social media to contribute to social justice movements by (1) calling on their very generation, Gen Z, to come together in efforts to highlight racism and put a stop to racial issues,
something they want to end with their generation; (2) engaging in activism, allyship, and being active, not just on social media, but offline as well, enacting identities as activists in their local communities; and (3) fighting against the status quo in ways that demand equity, justice, and antiracism, which proves to be an exhausting fight.

In sum, the hashtags below were used on various social media platforms by Black and Latinx youth in this study. These hashtags used on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube speak to the identities of Black and Latinx youth. I included them here to bring attention to teens' voices as it shows how they used literacies to position themselves as agents of change through activism, being active, and allyship. The hashtags also speak to how teens used social media to communicate with others, connecting them to others doing the same work aimed at justice efforts.

#speakout, #change, #changemakers, #genziswatching, #DanceActivism, #VideosforChange, #createandbeheard, #Youngchangemaker, #amplifyyouthvoice, #Blackchangemaker, #blackyouthpower, #blm, #blacklivesmatter, #nojusticenopeace, #systemicracism, #inclusion, #diversity, #racialjustice, #freedom, #ourancestorsaresurvivors #vote

The hashtags above help illuminate my theme, *Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements*. They show how Black and Latinx teens portray literacies within and through social media spaces related to their racialized experiences and varied identities.

**Gen Z Looking to Stop Generations of Racial Issues**

Two out of six cases in the study, Tatum and Dakarai, two Gen Z teens, used social media to engage in activism, action, and allyship by looking to stop generations of racial issues and somewhat criticize other generations before them. Too, they take on the responsibility of using digital protests and online activism, among other advocacy efforts, to stop systemic racism.
They questioned the efforts of previous generations, such as Millennials and Baby Boomers, and counter the narrative that they are sensitive, something Tatum despises, saying, "we are not sensitive, we are just in the business of holding people accountable, and they don't like that." In addition, Tatum, for example, used Twitter to call attention to how she and others in her generation are not going to allow specific social issues to continue, specifically those centered on race, gender identity, and sexuality, to name a few. For instance, Tatum retweeted a tweet supporting Black women when it comes to racial and sexual assault issues, which reads, "Sis this generation ain't sweeping pedophile men under the rug. We holding these mfs [explicit] accountable and letting our daughters express themselves [speaking emoji]." Here, Tatum communicates how her generation is not putting up with injustices and holding Gen Z responsible for ending them. Similarly, Dakarai used social media to call attention to the work of Gen Z and how she believed they are taking over the fight for social justice, leading the movement with activism, action, and allyship, but did not do so without making comments on other generations' efforts. Although she scrutinized other generations, she still used social media to use her voice to stop racial issues, calling attention to how her age should not make her and other members of Gen Z feel less of an activist for social change. For example, she posted lines of an excerpt of her poem, which read, "Don't you dare tell me I'm too young to understand, I regularly utilize both my ears and my brain. And trust me, I'm old enough to know that systemic racism in America, is traumatic and insane."

Further, these two cases, Tatum and Dakarai, used social media to help end racial issues spanning generations by integrating the arts with activism, taking a timely, multimodal approach, something they describe as different from the traditional ways other generations engaged in activism. For example, both Tatum and Dakarai engaged in photography, writing, and creating
videos, and in addition, Dakarai employed dance, bringing these to their social media platforms such as Instagram (i.e., Tatum and Dakarai), Twitter (i.e., Twitter), and YouTube (i.e., Dakarai) as they engaged in activism, action, and allyship for people of color. One, in particular, stood out because of the way the case, namely Dakarai, integrated dance with activism, action, and allyship in her use of social media. Using dance as part of her activism, Dakarai aimed to do her part to advocate for the end of racial issues that cycle throughout generations. Dakarai’s identity as a dance activist was formed after she entered a dance challenge that combined activism and expression through the art form of dance. Here, Dakarai engaged in activism through the arts, specifically through dance activism, bringing awareness to racial issues, and promoting activism, action, and allyship. Using a combination of dance and activism, Dakarai told her story through dance and expressed her emotions while amplifying the racial issues she cared about as she sought to create the future she wanted to see through dance. Hence, this video posted on Instagram and YouTube adds to the new ways Gen Z calls attention to racial issues. She also calls attention to racial issues through her identity as a writer and content creator, as she used multimodal literacies such as videos, dance, podcast episodes, and her writing, specifically poetry, fiction, and journal articles. While doing so, Dakarai calls on Gen Z to be the generation to end the systemic issues grounded in race and racism that negatively affect the lives of people of color.

The other four cases, Laura, Samirah X, Camila, and Johnavan, used social media to engage in activism, action, and allyship as they look to stop generations of racial issues by educating people who are not part of marginalized communities. For example, these cases used their respective platforms to get the attention of non-Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) young people, adults, and those who held positions of power, enacting literacies on social media.
to get the attention of people without marginalized backgrounds. Though these cases used social media to share their experiences with other minoritized people, they went beyond this action and extended their calls of activism, action, and allyship to those within dominant backgrounds, for example, demanding White individuals to do the work alongside them.

For instance, Laura enacted literacy practices on Instagram to help bring awareness to issues of injustice people of color are susceptible to and does her part to end racism by calling out White people, including friends of hers, to engage in activism and action and allyship for people of color. She also calls attention to performative activism that White people engage in on social media. Specifically, Laura posted content on her Instagram story about so-called White allies not speaking up about issues affecting people of color, such as a *Saved By The Bell* meme which read, "The rage of the oppressed is never the same as the rage of the privileged." Adding to the post, Laura wrote the following commentary,

> it will never surprise me that every time there is a human rights crisis, my friends of the global majority are the ones who I see speak up. I'm always waiting on white "allies" to finally break their silence. I see all of you who are posting things that fit the aesthetic of your story or feed but never sharing support for the very people you claim to "stand with." we're loud, why aren't you? please don't ask me how to help if you won't take the action to do attempt in the first place.

Additionally, she works to stop generations of racism by using Instagram and Twitter to call on non-BIPOC individuals to speak out. For example, on Instagram, Laura reposted content about anti-racism and encouraged others to speak out and not resort to "injustice auto-replies," specifically those that fall into different categories such as, "I don't really use Instagram that way, people," "I just don't have anything new to add folks," "I can and will stay quiet because my
privilege allows me to" and challenges people to do their homework, decenter themselves, etc. Hence Laura is passionate about people "getting loud" and not being quiet just because their privilege allows them to. It is clear she wants people who are not people of color to condemn White supremacy.

One conflict I noticed within this sub-theme is that one of the six cases, specifically, Tatum is a proud supporter of Gen Z and highlights how they take action, hold others accountable, speak out, are active, and engage in allyship. She often critiqued other generations and compared their activism efforts to those of Gen Z, maintaining that Gen Z will make the most significant strides in the social justice movement. However, Tatum does not use all her platforms to bring attention to inequity, injustice, and racism. For instance, she has an Instagram account where her feed, Instagram stories, or story highlights do not have any evidence of her work to highlight injustices, showcase acts of injustice, inequality, racism, or enact activism, being active, or allyship. Though other cases besides Tatum, specifically Laura and Camila, do not highlight content about racial issues on their Instagram feeds, they (re)post this type of content to their Instagram stories (i.e., Laura and Camila) and save it on their Instagram story highlights (i.e., Laura). Thus, there is still evidence of them bringing awareness to racial issues, engaging in activism and allyship, being active, and contributing to the social justice movement. I do not see this with Tatum, who does not use her other platform of choice, Instagram, to engage in activism, action, allyship, or even highlight racial issues. Her social media use meets social justice movements on Twitter alone, as she engaged in conversations about social justice issues, including racial equality and LGBTQIA+ rights.

In comparison, her Instagram is used to show her latest writing, photography, and like many other teens, it consists of photos of herself, her friends, and her family. She also included
personal highlights, for example, posts related to her 18th birthday, prom, and college acceptances. Her feed, story content, and story highlights are all free of mention of racial issues. However, on Tatum's Twitter account, she is active in politics, the LGBTQIA+ community, racism, police brutality, and social injustice. Tatum's Twitter is a space where she advocates for marginalized communities; however, the conflict here is that this work is happening solely on this platform, whereas her Instagram presents a more clean-cut representation of who Tatum is. Thus, it is clear that she has conflicting purposes for her social media accounts. Even though her Instagram and Twitter serve two different purposes, she shared that she used her voice in an interview with me because "God gave me this big voice. This is what I am supposed to do. This is why he gave me a big voice." In another interview, she said, "my generation, Gen Z, we are not standing for stuff other generations allowed to happen." However, she used social media in conflicting ways, one being to engage in activism, action, and allyship and the other just to be a typical teen. From informal conversations, I inferred that Tatum considered herself popular in school due to her high school leadership roles. She suggested the need to use social media to make her voice known about important real-world issues and post "just regular teen stuff," specifically on Instagram, where her friends followed her, whereas using Twitter for engaging in activism, action, and allyship. However, her high school friends followed her on this platform too, which describes why she engaged on social media to highlight her advocacy for social justice and show her life as a high school Senior involved in her school.

Making a Difference on Social Media Platforms and in Local Communities

Four out of six case studies, particularly Dakarai, Tatum, Laura, and Samirah X engaged in actions that sought to make a difference in the lives of people of color in both online and offline spaces. Their work, grounded in activism, action, and allyship on social media platforms
and local communities, attempted to change how society perpetuates injustices that negatively impact minoritized people. For example, in their unique ways, these four teens took their activism beyond the virtual space of social media platforms to the very streets within communities they occupied. Specifically, these cases go local; they work with their local organizations, engage in efforts to support community efforts, and are involved in grassroots organizing, using self-organization to promote the participation of community members and engage in activism, action, allyship by being responsible for their efforts and the efforts of their community. For example, Dakarai and Tatum wrote for local newspapers in their community to engage in activism, action, allyship to make a difference. Adding to this work in local communities, Dakarai and Tatum participated in a local podcast, and Tatum also participated in an NPR podcast. Aside from this, Tatum was class president of her Senior high school class, part of volunteer groups in her local community, worked with her local city transit organization as a youth transit leader, did PR work for a local food pantry, and was a member of local government offices such as a youth advisory council to the mayor and councilwomen.

Further, Laura was very active on her college campus, where she participated in student organizations on campus that cultivated opportunities for her to work alongside other young people who were socially conscious and sought to make a difference in the experiences and treatment of people of color in society. Within her local community, Laura took part in campus demonstrations, protests, and petitions. For example, she participated in George Floyd and Breonna Tatum's memorial and protests with other university students. She highlighted this and other community engagement on her social media platforms and encouraged others in her local community to be part of the advocacy efforts taking place at her school.
Adding to this sub-theme, one of these cases, specifically Samirah X, stands out because she made a difference in her local community differently from other teens, doing so specifically through the arts. Samirah X's activism, action, and allyship offline occurred through her acting in her local community, which speaks to how she chose to make a difference as an up-and-coming Black actress who adds to the social justice movement by being active in spaces that lacked representation of Black people. Samirah X not only made a difference on social media platforms she used, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, but she also transferred her activism to her acting within her local community, moving from social media to the performing stage as she contributed to the social justice movement. Thus, by enacting literacy practices that highlighted how activism related to her identity as an aspiring actress of color, Samirah X made a difference through her actions within online and offline spaces.

The other two, Johnavan and Camila, engaged in activism, action, and allyship solely through their literacy practices on one social media platform, Instagram; thus, as they contributed to the social justice movement, they did so within the context of an online space. These two cases definitely made a difference in their activist efforts, doing so primarily online, except for taking action on smaller, micro levels, specifically within their circle of friends and family members. For example, Johnavan, in an interview with me, said, "I mean, I talk to my friends and family, like my mom, about this stuff all the time, so that's kind of taking action too."

Though these two cases did not showcase local community efforts to the degree of the others, they still made strides towards contributing to the social justice movement through activism and action.

One conflict presented within this sub-theme is the nature of the study's context that occurred across social media platforms with examining how the cases in this study did activism
work in their local context. Even though I was not primarily looking at teens' local community efforts, they were prevalent across cases. The study sought to understand the literacy practices teens enacted in these online spaces; however, in most of the cases, precisely four out of six, there was evidence of teens' going beyond virtual activism, making a difference by engaging in the groundwork of activism. Thus, four of my cases continued their action employed on virtual practices even when they disconnected from social media platforms.

In sum, this sub-theme explored the similar, different, and conflicting ways that all of my cases used social media to make a difference in the lives of people of color through activism, action, and allyship, adding their contributions to social justice movements grounded in race. This sub-theme also considers how cases transitioned from virtual efforts to actions within their local communities, which further situated how they positively impacted Black and Brown people's lives.

*The Fight for Equity, Justice, and Anti-racism Can be Exhausting*

Two out of the six case studies, Laura and Dakarai, social media literacies fostered conversations about equity, justice, and antiracism. In doing so, the content they posted on Instagram went beyond bringing awareness to racial issues and gave their audience concrete ideas for participating in this work. For example, their content included specific actions that people can take towards allyship advocacy efforts. These two cases' constant engagement in this work has bought them to exhaustion, as they continue to provide more and more resources and educate others as injustices, acts of racism, and a lack of equity continue. The other four, Johnavan, Samirah X, Camila, and Tatum, advocate for equity, justice, and antiracism tirelessly by highlighting general issues rooted in systemic racism. They do not give their audiences practical suggestions for engaging in advocacy or allyship.
Additionally, three out of the six cases, specifically, Tatum, Dakarai, and Laura, showed advocacy and allyship for the LGBTQIA+ community as they tirelessly fought for equity and justice for people of color within this community. For example, these three cases shared content on Instagram and Twitter that embraced their identities as change agents and activists for other marginalized communities, such as members of the LGBTQIA+ community and specifically LGBTQIA+ people of color. The other three cases, namely Johnavan, Samirah X, and Camila, did not specifically name this community. Instead, they focused their efforts on speaking on systemic injustices of Black (i.e., shown by Johnavan, Samirah X, Camila) and Latinx individuals and communities (shown by Camila).

Further, all the cases within the study utilized social media in ways that helped them call attention to the exhausting work they were engaged in within equity, justice, and antiracism treatment for people of color. Though teens' advocacy, being active, and allyship efforts were meaningful, it was also hard work and took a toll on youth. Also, the ongoing injustices of Black and Brown people being highlighted in society, one after another, added to the exhaustion of teens. For example, Laura, in her first interview, discussed her relationship with social media, noting that there are times when she needs to, she can "step away from it," going on to say, "I think that's really important, especially like when things become mentally exhausting" about social justice efforts, explicitly speaking to when the fight for equity, justice, and antiracism becomes exhausting as teens' activism, action, and allyship practices on social media elevate the social justice movement but also drains them. Thus, Black and Latinx teens' enact literacy practices related to their racialized experiences and the racialized experiences of marginalized communities. Here, the identities of Black and Latinx youth are impacted by the heaviness they carry, the exhaustion they overcome, and the tiredness they channel through activism, allyship,
and being active, despite being fatigued. Further, Laura also discussed on social media how it could be exhausting for political officials to call on the younger generation to do the work, to work towards change, and feels that it "should not be the burden of the younger generation when the elected officials have the power to change laws and the power to really do something." Here, Laura shows how marginalized teens' activism, action, and allyship efforts get taken for granted, as they often relied upon far too much for things Laura described as "not our responsibility or within our power."

Adding to this, one case, Dakarai, in particular, stood out because she wrote and shared poetry on secular media that revealed a theme of being exhausted dealing with racism and injustices of people of color, in addition to discussing being tired in her interviews and captions of her social media posts. For example, Dakarai wrote on Instagram, explaining her reasoning behind it, saying, "I am so tired, I'm so angry, and so disappointed. So I wrote a poem" and posted the lines of her poem across several different Instagram posts. Another example of her using writing to portray how exhausted she is from fighting against Black and Brown people's injustices is within the lines of another poem she posted on social media, which in part read, "I'm terribly exhausted and this is definitely not the first time. That a Person in Blue has committed a devastating crime. This is most definitely a daunting and arduous hill we climb. When it comes to black people, they think they're quarters amongst dimes." In another piece of writing, Dakarai yearned for equity, justice, and a society without racism and expressed being tired of pursuing these fundamental human rights, writing, in part, "I've always known America. But I've never known it like this. I've never felt it, or experienced it like this...Discriminatory things. Again, unbelievable things. Just stop, I'm tired." In addition to her writing on and off social media,
Dakarai expressed being tired and exhausted with hearing about issues of injustice towards people of color. In our first interview, she said,

    Just like this whole Black Lives Matter stuff. I'm just irritated because I'm 16, and I feel like I'm growing gray hairs having to tell people simple stuff. Um, like I haven't even been on Earth for a full 20 years yet, and I know I am tired of hearing about this stuff and having to repeat myself about how Black Lives Matter so imagine how the people who are in their 30s and 40s and their 50s are tired and how White people say how tired they are about hearing about this and are like I'm so tired of hearing you talk about that um imagine how we are tired, we are feeling that.

Similarly, in her third interview, Dakarai echoed the same sentiments, saying, "Now I'm just tired." Thus, Dakarai's social media posts, writing artifacts on and off social media, and commentary in her interviews show how her case uniquely employs activism, action, and allyship to the point of exhaustion, which further expresses how the fight for equity, justice, and anti-racism has personally impacted her and other generations.

Moreover, one conflict present within this sub-theme is the need for people of color to be valued for who they are, unique individuals who are not all the same regarding each other and not the same as others outside of their cultural identity and racial background. For example, Johnavan’s lines in a poem, such as, "I stand for black lives;" "I imagine an America with no white privilege;" "I imagine an America where all races are treated equally;" and "I stand for black lives because I'm black and I have to live as a black person" show how invested he is in equity, justice, and antiracism efforts. However, some lines show contradictions to value people of color's unique experiences, such as, "We all came from the same place"; "We all breathe the same air"; "And all of our lives hold the same values," show a conflict between marginalized
people lived experiences and those belonging to dominant racial identities. This poem, which Johnavan discussed in an interview with me, is an example of a conflicting way one case explained the similarities of people of color to those not from minoritized populations while advocating for equity, justice, and antiracism.

Another contradictory way that one case, Johnavan, enacts literacy practices grounded in activism, action, and allyship on social media is by sending different messages. For example, he posted a video with the caption, "Come on America," on Instagram in response to the attack on the Capitol Building from Trump supporters. Then, in another instance, he discussed in an interview how "you need a big social media platform and following to make an impact," discussing how NBA athletes have more leverage to call attention to the systemic injustices towards people of color and expressed his wishes to grow his platform. Thus, Johnavan expressed mixed views on the effectiveness teens like himself have in challenging racism through equity-oriented and justice-oriented actions and considered the idea that a more prominent platform is needed to spread this message through social media effectively. Hence, he feels exhausted when his advocating efforts are not noticed on the same level as well-known public figures, such as basketball or football players, and attributes this to celebrity status, platform, and notoriety.

In sum, this sub-theme explored the similarities, differences, and the contradictory ways that all my cases used social media to engage in activism, action, and allyship, fighting through exhaustion towards equity, justice, and antiracism for Black Indigenous People of Color.
Theme 3: We the People: Marginalized Teens Use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism

The third theme in the cross-case analysis is *We the People: Marginalized Teens Use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism*. This theme name was derived because each teen in this study engaged in reimagining the society they lived in and a new framework of government. Within this theme, I learned that teens of color are currently acting as agents in their society; they own their literacy experiences and serve as advocacy experts in online spaces, making strides towards social justice now, taking active roles in activism, drawing from social media literacies. This section shows how teens are enacting real-world literacies on social media, the kinds that schools and classrooms attempt to foster; however, this theme illustrates how teens are not just preparing to one day participate in the world, as they do and practice for in most educational spaces, they already are, and social media is an outlet that is helping them do that. Social media provided an outlet for teens to engage in civil dialogue in the ways they know best. Therefore, using their unique yet collective literacy practices on social media platforms, teens disrupted traditional notions of power and challenged the way things are. They highlighted real-world experiences to write their basic principles of the country they lived in, anchored in equity, justice, and antiracism, demonstrating their important role in reimagining America and the American government. The theme title also stems from how teens transformed the way other people treated marginalized individuals. Through their literacy practices on social media, teens wrote unofficial new laws for people to follow, grounded in equity, just justice, and antiracism, creating their own historical document through their work in online communities.
Moreover, teens in the study illustrated their identity as people who, in their unique ways, showcase the important things they experience. Specifically, teens show that by utilizing various social media platforms to enact their complex racialized experiences and identities related to their literacy practices, they acknowledge elements of equity, justice, and antiracism. These elements grounded in race rarely find themselves in the laws and policies that govern our society. Though the literacies teens enact on social media overwhelmingly address their racialized experiences and the shaping of their identities, these tenets are not substantially present in our country’s most recognized documents. For example, in the Preamble of the United States Constitution, equity, justice, and antiracism are not referenced in ways that connect to discussions of systemic injustice, which often affect marginalized individuals, particularly teens of color. Meanwhile, Black and Brown teens’ social media presence portrayed uniquely still speaks to marginalized communities formed by shared connections.

Additionally, this theme introduces the need for White individuals to learn how Black and Brown individuals, particularly teens, illustrate the importance of centering their experiences and identities grounded in race in places where Whites hold dominant views, such as decision making on how our society operates. In support, I created a revamped version of the Preamble of the Constitution, written with the perspectives of the marginalized teens in the study, doing my best to remove myself as much as possible. I included equity, justice, and antiracism, ideals youth of color spoke to on social media platforms. Since teens’ online sophisticated practices become enacted online to create their laws of the land, the virtual worlds they rewrite in the most creative ways every day. Mastering social media literacies provide the opportunity for Black and Brown teens to revamp policy and procedures in offline spaces.
This section will explore the similarities, differences, and conundrums, such as problems and uncertainties, of understanding how underrepresented populations draw from their racial experiences and identities conveyed through social media to rewrite history. Doing so gives a new meaning to *We the People*, as those represented at the table are often not the voices represented in this study. In sum, Black and Brown youth, through racialized experiences and complex identities, speak to the theme in different ways, and each has different experiences. However, whether they connect in varied ways, they are noticeably absent, not for reasons on their part, for decisions about how systems operate. This exclusion happens both locally and nationally regarding policies, laws, and decisions that impact them.

Nevertheless, as illustrated below, it is critical for teens of color to feel counted in conversations and spaces so they feel part of the "we" in "We the People." For teens of color, confining them to virtual spaces where they engage in literacies such as hashtags, tweets, uploads, shares, and comments to reflect on racialized experiences and identity markers is not enough as they can also use these very literacies to rewrite the law of the land in the documents that desperately call for equity, justice, and antiracism. Too, since Black and Brown teens are not regularly part of critical decision making, especially in American history conversations, the theme *We the People* is used to call attention to whose voice is missing and what this says about what opinions are valued as significant in rewriting the law of the land so to speak.

In brief, I maintain that if marginalized teens were to rewrite the Preamble to establish, in part, the law of the land for the United States, they would highlight the lived experiences of marginalized communities, their complex identities, and call attention to the power structures. Hence, from the perspective of marginalized youth, specifically the Black and Brown teens in this study, I drew from their data to create a revised Preamble to The Constitution in honor to
speak to how they enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences. I argue that those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth. For instance, bringing a sense of inclusion, belonging, and cultural pride to the infamous We the People line of the Preamble, a piece of one the law of the land document, can stimulate being valued, as they encompass the people referenced to if now more than ever. Below is a revised Preamble, I created which represents a document teens of color could not have contributed to but represents the advancements they hope to see as they demand representation in discussions about the world they live in moving forward.

**We the People: Rewriting the Preamble from the Perspectives of Marginalized Teens**

We, the People of the United States, including youth of color from marginalized populations, in order to form a more inclusive society, establish racial justice, insure policy reform through protest, provide societal equity, advocate for equality, promote safety by strengthening relationships with those in power, including law enforcement, secure the goals of collective antiracism, and liberty and justice for all, including all marginalized individuals, promote the general progress of social justice movements, and secure the advantages of our marginalized communities and our allies, do regulate and establish this new and improved Constitution for the United States of America which all authority originates from the people, for the betterment of all people, including but not limited to people of color and our allies who stand to dismantle any and all threats to systemic oppression.

#preamble #representationmatters #youthvoice #youthofcolor #change #GenZIsWatching, #blackyouthvisionaries, #SystemicRacism, #inclusion, #diversity, #SpeakOut #amplifyyouthvoice, #createandbeheard, #pocyoumatter

Above are hashtags used on various social media platforms by Black, Latina, and Latine youth in this study. I included them here to bring attention to student voices further as it shows how they used components of social media platforms to introduce themselves as somebody worthy enough to contribute to rewriting the laws of the land.
**Representation and Inclusion**

Four out of the six case studies showed their activism in any space that spoke to them. Dakarai, Tatum, Laura, and Samirah X used social media to rewrite the law of the land by increasing their presence in as many spaces as possible to counter the lack of representation and inclusion of marginalized people. These cases used social media to showcase what they were doing in other spaces. They shed light on being active. Whether as guests on podcast episodes, contributors to blogs, journalists and writers in magazines and newspapers, community engagement and organizing, or public relations work, four cases share commonalities of being active, activists, and prioritizing using their voices on and off social media. Thus, they rewrite the law of the land by including themselves intentionally to close the representation gap of people of color. For instance, Dakarai uploaded a video clip titled *Black Youth Matter* to her YouTube Channel, featuring her and other youth of color. In the video, Dakarai said, "My representation matters." At the end of the video, the following text appeared on the screen, "Black Youth Matter Today Tomorrow and the Days that Follow," followed by the words "Amplify, Celebrate and Empower the Voices of Black Youth, Invest In Our Education, Lives & Future." In the description box, Dakarai wrote, "Black Youth Will Always Matter." Further, Dakarai creates videos, whether for challenges, competition, or just a way to express her creativity to put out information about things that need representation and matter to her. In doing so, she disrupts and resists traditional norms while privileging representation across different mediums. As a Black content creator, she turns to outlets that allow her to use her voice, and video creating is one of those outlets. Specifically, Dakarai discussed the mental health of BIPOC teens and the need for representation in this area.
One teen, Tatum, stood out because she used her voice to offer ways to include Black and Brown teens in civic conversations. For instance, Tatum gets satisfaction from, as she says, "letting her voice be known." Illustrated by the NPR podcast episode she was a part of, Tatum discussed her experiences and opinions on what young people need to be taught in civic education. Tatum and other teens recommended civic education related to teens' lives in the civics education blog that accompanied the podcast. With Tatum leading the narrative, they wrote,

Even though many young people do not get good civics education, we still want to be active in the political process. If we don't receive it in school, we will most likely turn to social media to get our information. Tatum had no idea who Donald Trump was until he started trending on Twitter in 2016. Nothing at school teaches her to be engaged in voting, to learn about the candidates or the political process…But during this election cycle, we see more on social media about why we should vote and more encouragement to do early voting on social platforms. Some of Tatum's friends who were never interested in voting saw constant posts on their Instagram feed of voting resources and got more interested in voting. As a way to encourage them to vote, Tatum said to them that it takes about the same amount of time to create an Instagram account as it does to register to vote. We use this example to demonstrate why it's important to make civics education relatable and how important it is to have young people involved in the content of civics education. Think about it: Does any civic education in the country compare the time it takes to register to vote to creating an Instagram account?

Here, Tatum reflects on an important experience in representation and inclusion as she helped teens of color who may not have been interested in civics education change their minds. In the
process, Tatum used social media to rewrite the laws of the land, to include all voices in civil
dialogue, in constitutional conversations, and foster opportunities for all young people eligible to
vote to engage in conversations that make a difference.

The other two teens, Johnavan and Samirah X engaged in rewriting the law of the land by
focusing on who controlled the spaces that lacked entry of people of color, but they did not act to
disrupt them. Instead, they used social media to call attention to a society that excluded others
but did not feel they needed to use their voice to get into those spaces, choosing to highlight
them, informing others of their existence. Here, these two teens spoke to systemic racism as the
reason for little to no representation of people of color in spaces that work hard as systems to
exclude them. Doing so, they question who controls the door of entry to *We the People*, however
they do see a need to enter it at the time being.

A contradictory way that Samirah X used social media to rewrite the law of the land was
based on the lack of inclusion she felt regarding fitting in a community of Black people, who
seemed to prefer lighter-skinned people of color due to her darker skin color as a brown-skinned
girl. For Samirah X to use social media to rewrite the law of the land, she had to first deal with
internal issues of feeling excluded in the Black community for not being light-skinned, all before
speaking to the lack of Black women and girls in the entertainment and beauty industry,
specifically in the acting world. For instance, some self-discovery needed to occur before
Samirah X could focus on how she could play a role in fostering equity, justice, and antiracism
in rewriting the law of the land anchored in representation and inclusion of people of color in
broad spaces. Contradictory in that Samirah X is a person of color who felt she did not belong to
the same people she identified racially with, learning how to navigate racial issues in her
community. As a Black girl with darker skin and different hair texture than some of the Black
girls around her and uplifted in society, Samirah X learned self-worth, which is inconsistent with the stories of marginalized people calling for representation and inclusion from Whites.

However, after realizing that she belonged, she used social media to demand representation and inclusion for young Black girls who received similar messages that they were not beautiful because their skin tone was not as light as other girls of color. However, conflicting with the other cases, she resisted exclusion from Whites and challenged people of color's traditional notions of beauty rooted in European standards to help other girls embrace their hair and racial features connecting to their race after she first helped herself. She also reimagined the law of the land by writing scripts that showcased her own racialized experiences that she endured personally as a teen girl who did not think she was beautiful, and that made her feel as though she did not belong in underrepresented spaces. To Samirah X, being Black was not always something she celebrated, and now, she has come full circle, admiring her beauty as a brown-skinned Black girl and resisting the exclusion of Black girls. In sum, not only does Samirah X engage in rewriting the rules that exist in the field of being an actress, but she is also recreating the law of the land to encourage Black girls who are excluded by other Black people to feel part of "We the People." Here, Samirah X rewrites the law of the land for the brown girls everywhere with a little more melanin.

One conflict is presented within representation and inclusion because, at some point, Laura wanted to be White, something she is not proud of. She initially wanted to be included in a space where she questioned, in her writing, why she did not belong. Laura's schooling experiences in high school and during her first year of college are tied to being a Latina teen in predominantly White spaces where she did not feel included or represented. Laura explained how she wrote poetry in high school to express herself as a brown girl, saying,
One major thing throughout high school was I wrote a lot of the poetry, or just
general free writing that I was doing was related to my identity or my experiences
with that at my high school. So, even just like assignments in English class where
we were like having to write a poem, I was definitely writing about you know my
experiences; I had the opportunity to submit one of my poems about those
experiences to the literary arts magazine at my school and it got published. A year
ago. That was exciting. So yeah, I think it's kind of a way for me to like, let out
my emotions, and kind of articulate what I'm thinking in my mind and how I'm
feeling…

Laura submitted her poem, To Be White (featured in her cases' context section), and the student
organization published it in her school's magazine. This is a conflict because instead of wanting
representation as a Latine (a term she preferred to Latinx) person, which is how she identifies
herself, she wanted to assimilate into a community of people who did not represent her racial
background. Though now she is engaging in representation and inclusion efforts for Latine
people to feel included and represented without having to conform to traditional standards of
Whiteness, rewriting the law of the land using social media to do so.

**Power Relationships**

Five out of the six case studies called attention to the othering that marginalized people
face in society. To rewrite the law of the land, Dakarai, Tatum, Samirah X, Laura, and Camila
shed light on how power relationships work in White people's favor to otherized minoritized
people. They created and shared content across social media platforms that resisted practices that
“other” marginalized people. For instance, Camila addressed how power relationships in
language work to other those from Latinx backgrounds, those whose first language is not
English, and those who are bilingual. Camila has a complex relationship with her identity as a bilingual teen of color, specifically a Latina who identifies as Dominican. Thus, she experienced the different layers of power dynamics that are rooted in language. As a Spanish speaker in and outside of her home and community, Camila's language is sometimes seen as an asset and sometimes used against her. Rewriting the law of the land, Camila speaks to the importance of Latinx people using their home language. She does this by helping Latinx people in public, holding on to her culture at home, and pointing to incidents where she was praised, supported, and relied upon for speaking Spanish. However, in some contexts, Camila was not embraced as a person with cultural wealth. She endured a negative experience that influenced her to attempt to rewrite the policies of the workplace. On a broader level, she engaged in rewriting the laws of the land, calling attention to and dismantling power relationships used to other her and those like her. With that in mind, Camila, like the other teens, rewrites what is acceptable in power relationships often used to other Black and Brown people, transforming the othering that happens in society.

One case, Laura, in particular, stood out because Laura's racialized experiences as a Brown teen at her predominantly White high school became the topic of her tweets on Twitter. Laura calls attention to her experience in the Spanish class she took as a senior. Laura tweeted, "if you can't speak Spanish well, you shouldn't be a Spanish teacher. And if you are white and teaching Spanish speaking culture, stop "othering" Latino people. It makes the Latinos in your class uncomfortable." This tweet expressed her experience as a Brown student taught by a White teacher who created a negative classroom culture for her and other Brown teens. Laura discusses her high school and college experiences as a Brown student, mostly around White peers, teachers, and professors on social media, specifically Instagram and Twitter. Illustrated by
called attention to being uncomfortable, Laura helped herself and other students, making way for people of color to find a space carved out for them by them. Further, she used social media to rewrite the law of the land by explaining how she is for the liberation of people of color, embracing *We the People*, as she added the following text to an Instagram post, "learning how to move away from the label "liberal" when you are truly for the liberation of marginalized ppl [people] is so important."

The other teen, Johnavan did not focus on the impact of othering in power relationships, and instead, he highlighted the way organizations, such as the NBA and NFL, misuse power over their players. While doing so, he shows the racial disparities between owners and players. For these reasons, Johnavan literacy practices on social media, anchored in the power dynamics in athletics, are used to rewrite the law of the land, calling out the powers that be. For instance, Johnavan discussed the role power plays in the professional athletic world, often grounded in race relations. For example, Johnavan points to something he calls "the slave owner mentality" to highlight how basketball and football owners are part of a systemic structure that sees players as slaves to an organization. When asked his thoughts about LeBron J James, along with other NBA players speaking out despite the power dynamic between the owners, who are majority White and the Black players, he explained, "Yeah, I like it. He is one of my favorite players, so he got a lot of hate from people…talking about like the NBA is getting too, political or you know just focus on basketball, just play basketball…but I think he just doesn't care, he's going to speak out whenever he wants to, and yeah I like it. People just really don't like him speaking out or anyone in the NBA speaking out; that's that slave owner mentality."

Contradictions here exist in the sense that almost all of my cases used social media to rewrite the law of the land by disrupting the ways Black and Brown's people are "othered" by
other individuals. However, Johnavan takes a more macro approach and almost disputes that individuals deserve the blame for where power dynamics go wrong. Instead, he rewrites the law of the land by placing fault on organizations for power relationships that work against equity, justice, and antiracism in society. Thus, Johnavan used social media to call attention to systemic structures such as policing, government, and organizations that need transforming.

**Accountability**

Three out of the six case studies Tatum, Dakarai, and Samirah X rewrite the law of the land by holding teens accountable for doing more than those that came before them. They used social media to embody a sense of the need for young people taking accountability for their actions or non-actions, calling for them to earn their seat at the "We the People" table by being active. Samirah X's case stands out because it is centered around how she holds herself accountable to guarantee her own freedom of speech and freedom of other teens of color through scriptwriting, acting, and directing. Samirah X identifies as an actress and screenwriter, which aids in rewriting the existing traditional notions of the acting industry. To Samirah X, "We the People" included a seat at the table for many more Black professional actresses, screenwriters, and directors. Being left out is not an option, just as it is not for the other teens in this study; however, Samirah X enacts it differently by specifically highlighting the following after being asked about two films she is a part of being screened at a film festival, exclaiming, "yeah um i'm super excited to get picked up for that film festival because I got picked up as an actor in in all by design in there and then as a filmmaker for black girls vs ambiguous so like both my films are in there, so I was really happy about that because that's pretty big for me." Here, Samirah X privileges the notion that holding herself accountable for the freedom of speech for people of color is necessary for rewriting the land with equity, justice, and antiracism in mind.
The other three cases, Laura, Johnavan, Camila, used social media to rewrite the law of the land by telling personal stories and recounting lived experiences to seek accountability for the lack of equity, justice, and antiracism in their lives and the lives of those that look like them. For instance, Johnavan, not feeling welcome in online gaming spaces, takes on the importance of accountability in online spaces, like social media, where racism thrives. *We the People* is centered here as Johnavan did not feel part of the gaming community and thought they lacked accountability for their racist actions, using his personal experience to be the reason behind calling out systemic racism. Johnavan claimed, "yeah like it happens, a lot, like all the time in like gaming like I play...a lot and you know if you have a deeper voice, or you talk a certain way, then yeah they'll they'll start like they'll start saying racist things and stuff like that. Explaining the need for accountability in rewriting the law of the land, he went on to say,

Yeah, like I had like an online friend for a while and apparently he thought I was like white the whole time. When he knew I was Black, that's when he started saying racist stuff and stuff like that so I think they do it more when like they don't do it until they find out you're Black. Yeah, so they can just say anything they want, do anything they want, like they can't get in trouble for it really. Definitely a lot of the N word. Like a lot of stuff that people say, like just in general, like stuff like, I bet you can jump high or something like that. I think if you're more athletic, they'll do like racist athletic jokes and stuff like that. Um yeah a lot of N word, i'm trying to remember what they would say cause me and my cousin were playing too, and it was two white guys and they were coming at us with a bunch of racist stuff. He was like nine he was playing with some other kids and they were being racist to him and then I got on and we would play. Yeah and they started being racist to me, and all this other stuff.
Johnavan found it necessary to rewrite the law of the land using social media because of the lack of accountability within majority-White gaming communities and gaming organizations. This personal story drives the way Johnavan used social media to rewrite the law of the land, anchored in questioning who makes the rules, who gets to exclude others, and who says how these communities are governed and who gets to be a part of them.

One of these three cases, in particular, stood out for highlighting contradictions. Camila's case study addressed the need for more accountability in the workplace, spoke to people of color from different ethnic backgrounds needing to practice being equitable and just towards each other, and expressed the need to hold all people accountable, even those who experience racism themselves. Camila's personal story about the need for accountability drives her social media content, such as what she shares and posts online, to rewrite the law of the land. Her stance on the need for accountability for Whites and people of color, such as Blacks, informs how she rewrites the law of the land. Her social media practices focus on how she and other Latinx people are treated by those in society, explicitly pointing to educators, coworkers, and society in general. Thus, she calls for accountability for all people, even people of color. For example, Camila had to contact those of higher authority at her workplace after feeling as though she and her friends felt like they were victims of racism due to speaking their home language, Spanish, portraying their Latina culture. She described the situation by recalling what a Black supervisor said to her, saying,

...I don't appreciate the language you guys are talking. I was like, um, excuse me, like I actually spoke up like my other friend was too nervous. She had a panic attack…and then she just started crying…I was like, what are you talking about? She was like, don't speak Spanish, I don't understand you guys, and I was like, no, that's like our culture. I was like,
this makes no sense, and she's like you guys are talking about us, and you guys just have
to speak English in here. I said we get to talk whatever we want because I don't know if
you know, but in the amendments, we have freedom of speech, and so she just like
walked away, so I texted - I texted the general manager...I have this statement I sent to
him also because he said to send him a statement, so I wrote a statement.

This example shows contradictions in the theme, as it is an example of how marginalized
individuals also do the marginalizing at times. It is also a conflict because minoritized teens
echoed the need for equity, justice, and antiracism from White individuals and did not generally
speak on the issues between Black and Brown communities. Here, that conundrum highlighted
by Camila's case stands out in a way that sheds light on how rewriting the law of the land also
takes holding minoritized people accountable when needed.

*Educating Others*

Four out of the six case studies used social media to rewrite the law of the land by
educating others through collaborating with different organizations to take action through
various art forms such as writing, photography, dance, music, and acting. Dakarai, Tatum, Laura,
and Samirah X not only worked closely with their community but forged collaborations with
local, state, and national organizations, many of which they initially connected with through
social media. One of these teens, Laura, in particular, stood out because she focused on not just
people. For instance, Laura used social media to rewrite the law of the land by anchoring her
efforts on people and the planet from an environmentalist perspective. She worked with several
climate justice and environmental organizations and educated others on social media using her
content alongside content from these organizations to illustrate the mantra, people and planet
over profit. Laura's community efforts with local and national organizations speak to how she
educates others through collaboration. She spoke about one international organization saying how it was important for her to include them in the bio of her Instagram profile since it is a big part of her identity and how she educates others using Twitter and Instagram. She explained,

So the first thing, there is the tag One Up Action, and that's the organization that I do most of my work with, um, like that I am primarily a part of. So I just want to have that in there because anytime I post about them, repost their stories, anyone can just go on my bio and click on that @ to check out what we're doing at the time. The second thing is people and planet always over profit, which is kind of a quote that you might hear a lot at like climate protests... and I always really like that term because I think it really encompasses what the movement is about. It's putting people and the planet first and not looking to like profit off of others or that kind of thing.

Further, she redefined the underlying message of *We the People* to one that stands up for a variety of marginalized groups in a way that bridges their lack of equitable, just, and antiracist experiences by using climate justice and environmental justice to bring attention to the needs of underrepresented groups of people, highlighting how they are impacted most by our planet environmental crisis. She is the only teen in the study who privileges environmental protection just as much as the protection of BIPOC lives. Also, Laura rewrites the law of the land by privileging the very land on earth and the people occupying it. Too, she embodies the people, including allies, to the extent where she finds a seat in the *We the People* space by influencing the very people who may hold traditional notions. Taking on equity, justice, and antiracism, Laura organizes in online and offline spaces using social media to drive both contexts. Beyond looking for inclusion as worthy of sitting with people making the decisions, she creates spaces to do so at institutions that are often places of systemic racism, where she talks to professors on
how they can make their classes more tolerable for people of color. In short, Laura stands out because she centers her work around her community efforts at a local, state, and national level and the role she has in spreading awareness to others, educating them on things such as the importance of voting, the connection between people and planet, and the need to embrace who you are.

The other two teens, Camila and Johnavan, used social media to rewrite the law of the land by educating others by calling out, bluntly, their issues with the country and speaking to how it impacts those who identify as they do racially. For example, Camila airs on the confrontation side when there is a dispute grounded in racism. Camila educates others to advocate for rewriting the law of the land in any forceful way possible. She approaches educating others by highlighting the lack of diversity by being assertive, commanding to take a seat at the table in a secure way. Camila views equity, justice, and antiracism as accomplished through being dominant. She is proud of her Dominican descent, and in the conversation of "We the People," she questions who gets granted membership over others and why. These two teens also educated others by using social media to highlight the pride and joy of their race as they rewrite the law of the land. For instance, Camila said, "I actually had a friend, and they were embarrassed to be Hispanic, and I was like, how could you ever be embarrassed to be Hispanic or whatever culture you are from? I'm so proud of that. I am proud ...How can you ever be embarrassed to be where you're from? I love, I love my culture, I love my community."

A conundrum exists here with Johnavan's case, which also rewrites the law of the land by using social media to encourage people to question the lack of equity, justice, and antiracism in professional sports, such as in the NBA. Johnavan's case brings an athletic stance to educating others on social justice issues. For instance, he takes on equity, justice, and antiracism in the
society he lives in by using social media to educate others about people of color, particularly Black student-athletes like himself and Black professional athletes such as those in the National Basketball Association (NBA), arguing that they should be included and welcomes to speak in conversations outside of basketball. In doing so, Johnavan, someone who identifies as a basketball player himself, relates to Black athletes who do not fit perfectly in societies' idea of the role of a basketball player. Frequently they are not included in the people who should do the talking. Unfortunately, this notion is comparable to the idea of "We the People," where some individuals did not have the opportunity to express their thoughts about the law of the land or other governing principles. As with the majority of Black players, they are encouraged not to share their personal experiences grounded in race, the impact race has on their identities, or openly portray their views on topics such as equity, justice, and antiracism enacted in the press or on social media platforms. Thus, Johnavans' case represents a conflict in that it does not speak to the others since he used social media to rewrite the law of the land by educating people solely about the need for basketball players and other professional players of color to speak on social justice issues and brings attention to acts of racism. In sum, Johnavans' experience is unlike the others in that he is the only Black male in the study, hence he speaks to the important things that are unique to his experiences.

The third theme in the cross-case analysis We the People: Marginalized Teens Use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism explored the similarities, differences, and conflicting and contradictory ways that all of my cases used social media as a way to rewrite the law of the land through representation and inclusion, power relationships, accountability, and educating others. The Black and Latinx teens’ cases show how they enact literacy practices related to their racialized experiences across social media spaces.
Also, the case studies are anchored in the identities of Black and Latinx teens and show how they engage in literacy practices on social media to transform their society.

**Chapter Summary**

In sum, this chapter discussed the three overall themes, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces; Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements;* and *We the People: Marginalized Teens use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism* and broadened sub-themes within them for the cross-case, noting similarities, differences, and conundrums such as conflicting and contradictory content across the case studies within them. More specifically, this chapter highlighted how the study’s six cases engaged in enacting literacy practices in various social media spaces related to their racialized experiences and also provided a collective yet unique perspective of showing the identities of Black and Latinx youth from their online literacy practices. In the next chapter, I suggest implications related to these findings, as well as additional ways to continue to seek understanding of how teens intersect their perspectives and racialized experiences with their literacy practices, and how it plays out in online spaces such as social media, where teens of color navigate platforms with a sense of agency towards social change and advocacy for social justice. Following is a discussion and summary of the major findings and conclusions drawn from this research. I also discuss this study’s place within the existing literature and the implication of this research to literacy scholarship. Finally, I make recommendations for future research and practice.
CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

...it's power in numbers. Like the more you see people doing things, it may inspire others to want to help and join, so just being in a [social media] space, I feel like it helps to empower people in general, and it spreads the word. - Samirah X

Too often, Black and Latinx teens are criticized for having deficits within literacy practices, from standard and traditional stances employed in schools and school-like contexts. Unfortunately, the advanced and complex practices youth of color enact in social media spaces do not always make their way into conversations about worthy literacy engagement. This work attempts to redefine what counts as literacy, paying particular attention to social media literacies. When we pay attention to spaces, like social media, where youth spend so much of their time, we uncover the high-quality literacies youth are enacting and how they impact society, which requires the need to first position Black and Latinx youth as capable of autonomous, agentic work, the kind that gets played out on social media, and explores how those literacy practices shape their experiences where race and literacy align. As the above quote from Samirah X illustrates, teens noticed other young people taking action on social media, which inspired them to take action against inequities towards people and communities of color. For Samirah X, having a profile and being part of the social media community allowed her to normalize using her voice to advocate for diversity, inclusion, and social justice issues, which I argue is similar for the other teens in the study. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the ways teens of color used social media literacies to advocate for social justice. From the perspective of the youth who participated in this study, I found that all of the cases highlighted the multiple and intersecting identities of teens of color, engaged in activism, action, and allyship, and reimagined society and a new way to govern through social media literacies and did so in similar, different
and conflicting and contradictory ways, which I explored in detail in phase two of the findings section.

Broadly, the cross-case study findings are a response to the gaps identified in the literature (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Black, 2005; Black, 2009; Greene, 2016; Greenhow et al., 2016; Haddix et al., 2015; Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Patterson, 2017; Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017). The findings contributed to this area of study by focusing on how students of color use social media literacies to advocate for social justice, which included how they engaged in (a) making sense of the intersections of marginalized identities in social media spaces; (b) activism, action, and allyship through social media literacy; (c) and reimagining the society they lived in and a new framework of government through social media literacies. Hence, this study is unique because it contributes a cross-case analysis to fill a gap in the existing research, namely, how minoritized teens' language practices in social media spaces highlight their advocacy efforts towards enacting social change and social justice, extending beyond case study methods.

As a result, this study positions traditionally silenced voices to the forefront of research like other scholars (Baker-Bell, Paris, et al., 2017; Greene, 2016; Haddix et al., 2015; Kinloch et al., 2017; Moje, 2000; Moje, 2004; Price-Dennis, 2016; Skerrett, 2011); however, it stands alone as the only study to highlight the perspectives and experiences of marginalized students within social media spaces who are using language grounded in advocacy and action, to make changes in their society. Furthermore, this study brings something new to the literature reviewed as it draws unapologetically from critical perspectives, specifically BlackCrit and LatCrit theories, to highlight how youth of color used social media to enact, explore, and understand their antiracist, justice-oriented, and equity-conscious language towards authentic transformative efforts situated
in advocacy. Here, youth engaged with transformative work outside of schools and school-like environments such as camps, workshops, and after-school or summer programs (Aguilera & Lopez, 2020; Greene, 2016; Kinney, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017) to use social media as a platform for seeking social justice through antiracism, justice, and equity. In other words, the existing research literature does not account for how marginalized teens forefront their voices, challenge the status quo in society, and facilitate social change through social media literacies or, as I described earlier, underdog literacies in unsanctioned spaces. Therefore, this study contributes to existing literature, standing alone as a study drawing from both BlackCrit and LatCrit frameworks, pairing two critical theories to understand better and highlight the racialized experiences and racially-infused perspectives of marginalized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens' literacy experiences in social media spaces.

The literature reviewed revealed gaps in existing research: (a) the use, or lack thereof, of critical frameworks employed as theories for research such as CRT, BlackCrit, and LatCrit, including the pairing of such frameworks; (b) the lack of exploration into the place of social media in the fields of literacy and identity work/development, specifically how teens’ of color use social media to make sense of their racialized experiences and other influences to their identities; (c) the lack of literature highlighting the perspectives and experiences of marginalized students within social media spaces who are advocating for social justice through their own autonomy and agency, specifically using language to make changes in their society; (d) the inclusion of Latinx youth as participants in research areas that focus on the unique ways they engage in literacy practices outside classrooms or school-like environments; and (e) the tendency
to theorize about intersectionality without offering particular attention to how intersectionality gets enacted, such as on social media.

This dissertation study was conceptualized in response to the gaps that are noted above and explored in the literature review section of this paper. The purpose of this work is to understand how youth of color engage in literacy practices on social media platforms and enact social media literacies in response to their racialized experiences. The research questions that guided this work included: *In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences?* and *How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?* From the voices of the six teens, it was apparent that social media afforded youth opportunities to engage with literacy practices online and a means for using social media literacies to advocate for social justice. Closely interwoven with this work, youth of color's lived experiences centered on their race and racialized experiences act as the driving force behind their activism. This concluding chapter expands this study by examining themes and conclusions to add a more intricate understanding of what it means for marginalized teens to enact literacies for social justice, revitalizing and reimagining their identities as activists or just active youth across social media. The next part of the discussion takes a cross-case approach to respond to the first research question and its sub-questions.

**Discussion of Enacted Literacy Practices on Social Media and Teens' Racialized Experiences**

The first research question asked, "*In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences?*" The findings, summarized in the discussion introduction above, confirm research
already known in the field; for example, as Greenhow (2011) suggested, social media provides insights into youths' engagement and experiences and contributes to scholarly discourse about young people's learning in online spaces. Moreover, this work confirms existing research that contributes to scholarship supporting the importance of exploring the out of school literacy practices of youth of color and how those practices can bridge to classrooms and in-school practices (Kirkland, 2009; Lindstrom & Niederhauser, 2016; Moje, 2000; Moje, 2004; Price-Dennis, 2016; Skerrett, 2010; Skerrett, 2011; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). In contrast, the research question findings contradict current research by offering a new approach to explore youth of color's online literacy practices, one that deviated away from traditional academic spaces such as classrooms (Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), camps (Price-Dennis et al., 2017) and summer reading programs (Aguilera & Lopez, 2020), writing workshops (Kinney, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; Price-Dennis et al., 2017), and outside school clubs (Greene, 2016). Instead of focusing on digital literacies in school-like contexts, this work offers social media as an avenue for youth to explore their literacy practices driven by a search for social justice in their society.

One of the most valuable contributions of this study is that it positions teens of color as agents in their own literacy experiences and agents in their advocacy practices toward social justice. For example, in the cross-case theme, We the People: Marginalized Teens Use Social Media to Rewrite the Law of the Land Through Equity, Justice, and Antiracism, I highlighted how social media is an avenue for teens of color to be agents in the world they live in; specifically, teens in the study participated as active citizens in the world right now and not waiting to be considered established adults by society to do so. Because this work gives insight into how young people of color engage with literacy practices online and the literacy-related
dimensions of racially diverse teens, youth take an active role in activism, drawing from social media literacies. Answering the question, *In what ways do minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx teens, enact literacy practices in social media spaces related to their racialized experiences*, youth enacted social media literacies tied to their own racialized experiences and those of others within minoritized communities, and along the way, assumed literacy practices of activists, thus, acting as agents of social change. Thus, illustrating the point that social media is a tool for youth activism, as shown in the cross-case theme, *Activism, Action, and Allyship: Marginalized Teens’ Social Media use Meets Social Justice Movements*.

In sum, this study makes significant contributions to the research literature on students' out of school literacies, including online and digital literacies and new literacies, as it is pioneering work that has not been done before. That is, the research literature does not account for the ways in which students of color use social media literacies outside of school or school-like applications, to advocate for social justice, nor does it offer unique and timely ways to highlight the perspectives and experiences of marginalized students within social media spaces who are using language to make changes in their society, a view rarely heard in the literature. Further, outside of Patterson's (2017) study on the educational experiences and identities of biracial youth, included YouTube videos without directly interacting with participants, there are few examples of how critical perspectives, race-centered theories, or culture-centered conceptual frameworks have been applied to educational research about young people of color in social media spaces without being linked to a classroom or classroom-like settings (Greene, 2016; Haddix et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016).

However, literature exists in the field that holds similar purposes of this work, applied in contexts outside of the area of research, social media, yet still focused on Black and Brown teens'
out of school literacy practices that confirm this research. One example is Kinloch et al. (2017) study, which took a critical literacy approach to explore how two teen males' out of school literacy practices, within community engagement and social justice efforts, combine in a way that helps teens of color resist and speak back towards deficiency narratives of themselves and others. In an additional study, scholar Price-Dennis (2016) took a critical literacy approach to explore Black girls' digital literacies and how they enact critical literacy practices in digital spaces. Here, the literature showed how digital literacies enacted by Black girls were grounded in social justice aims, activism, Black girls' autonomy, and personal agency, also confirming this work. Last, current research that further validates the research question findings are linked to work examining activism in online spaces. Scholars Haddix et al. (2015) study analyzed the activism of one youth writer who called for social action and change. Thus, the research question findings are confirmed by research already in the scholarship of youth of color literacies in online spaces and contribute by introducing new perspectives on how teens of color, through social media literacies, advocate for social justice, bringing something new to existing research, specifically that social media is a tool for youth activism. The associated sub-question is addressed in the following section.

**Discussion of Social Media Literacies and the Identities of Marginalized Youth**

The subsequent research question asked, *How do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?* Findings from this work illustrated intersectionality in action. In other words, an example of how this study contributes to intersectionality literature is how teens' identities are situated in the layers of oppression within their intersecting identities. For instance, Tatum revealed how social media, specifically Twitter, showed the various pieces of who she was as a person, particularly as one layer of Blackness,
another layer of being a woman, and a layer of sexuality as a pansexual and member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Hence, her tweets represented all of these identities and their interrelatedness towards her advocacy efforts within social justice. This utilization of intersectionality in practice through online contexts has not been shown very much in research, especially in social media, which adds to the conversation in the existing research.

To review, intersectionality is a framework designed to explore the dynamic between co-existing identities (Crenshaw, 1989), and this study attends to the overlapping marginalized identities, particularly teens' memberships in multiple non-dominant groups. The degree to which teens in the study experienced marginalization in online spaces is influenced by the intersection of their varying identities. Through the lens of intersectionality, I establish how teens of color socio-cultural identities overlap and intersect and form new, more specific identities with new implications (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus, the individual identity groups these young people belong to, such as race, class, gender, gender identity, sexuality, and nationality, are not separate entities and cannot be compartmentalized. Therefore, intersectionality plays an integral role in acknowledging that a person can concurrently belong to multiple historically marginalized groups. This study contributes a perspective of intersectionality in practice, offering how intersections of Black and Latinx teens' identity markers are equitable, inclusive, socially just work. Consequently, these critical intersections of teens' identities were paid close attention to, particularly during the engagement with data analysis consistently throughout the study.

Specifically, the six teens in this case study engaged in literacy practices on various social media platforms, which presents a view of how intersectionality is enacted through these social media spaces, contributing a new way of thinking about intersectionality, such as in practice, that adds to the existing literature that already serves the purpose of theorizing about
intersectionality. This work takes a deep dive into how intersectional play out on social media through advocacy aims of teens of color. Here, I learned from the first cross-case theme, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens' Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces* that youth employed literacies that spoke to their co-existing identities, experiences of marginalization through intersectionality, and combined social and political dimensions of their identities, to make sense of who they are in similar, different, and conflicting ways. Those literacy practices, within the context of social media, shaped the identities of Black and Latinx youth by highlighting how race intersects with other identities such as class, gender, and gender identity, providing an opportunity to analyze how teens' race influenced other areas of difference (Crenshaw, 1989; Harris & Leonardo, 2018; Knight, 2002; Mayo, 2007). Thus, the sub-question findings confirm research already out there about intersectionality and contribute something new, a look into intersectionality as the basis for teens of color to engage in social media literacies to further reject the status quo and call attention to how they are marginalized, in more ways than one.

Adding to this discussion, one of the most valuable contributions of this study answers the sub-question, *how do those literacy practices within the context of social media shape the identities of Black and Latinx youth?* This study positions the intersecting identity markers of teens of color to explain how complex socio-cultural roles and identities are and how youth of color identities, through an intersectional lens, adds to their disadvantage and marginalization. Due to intersecting identities of race and social markers that further *other* teens of color, social media literacies become portrayed through advocacy to seek justice. Thus, the study confirms existing research on literacy and identity work (Gee, 2000) and contributes to that conversation by highlighting the place of intersectionality in the fields of literacy and identity, when applied in social media contexts.
Whereas, when thinking about social media literacies utilized by young people and the relationship to their identities, the study contradicts the work of new literacies scholars (Alvermann, 2010; Gee & Hayes, 2011a; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) who primarily focused on broadening notions of literacy to include the important literacies adolescents engage in outside of schools, with predominantly White youth. Though seminal work within online literacies, these scholars add to what is deemed as "standard" ways of enacting literacy in a context outside of schools, which continue to perpetuate and advance the dominant narrative of traditional notions of literacy. However, I contributed a look into the identities of youth of color through a critical lens applied to the field of digital, multimodal, and new literacies, explicitly social media literacies, while highlighting traditionally silenced voices within this scholarship.

In sum, my findings contribute to the theories that ground this study, BlackCrit, and LatCrit. Specifically, the thematic narratives in phase one and the cross-case thematic conclusions in phase two of the findings section help us understand how social media literacies employed by youth bring out Black and Brown teens' perspectives in this virtual space of social media. Precisely, the findings of my dissertation study add to BlackCrit and LatCrit's theoretical underpinnings through the notion that teens of color used literacy practices to attempt to make changes in the world through these online, digital, multimodal, and social spaces. Consequently, these conclusions solidify the importance of highlighting and foregrounding the voices of Black and Brown youth, which honors the premise of critical perspectives like BlackCrit and LatCrit. Social media, serving as a hidden gem for this work, provided a lens into how the history of marginalized Black and Brown people shows up in these 21st-century spaces, where youth refuse to be dismissed (Dumas & Ross, 2016) act passively or sit quietly.
Further, the findings of the study contribute to BlackCrit and LatCrit's theories by calling for the need to adopt a culturally responsive (Gay, 2002) and sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) lens within literacy, language, and English classroom spaces that tap into digital, multimodal, and social media literacies in online contexts. Beyond this, findings lend themselves to new conceptual frameworks and possibilities, ones grounded in new pedagogies rooted in culture and digital spaces and culture and youth engaged activism, which I name and describe further in the conclusion section that follows. When fully developed, a culturally digitized pedagogy and culturally active pedagogy can provide a more nuanced approach to extend the conversations around the intersections of culture, race, and identity and its place in the digital and active-inspiring spaces Black and Brown youth occupy. In addition to these contributions, this work has critical implications for practitioners, scholars, and teacher educators.

**Implications**

This research contributes to what practitioners, specifically what literacy educators and scholars know about how youth navigate social media spaces using literacies in ways that promote their autonomy and agency as they enact literacies to advocate for social justice. Moreover, this study's findings have the potential to help researchers and practitioners understand how youth of color use literacies in their everyday lives on social media to negotiate their racialized experiences and make sense of the society they occupy. This work also provides insight into how educators could value what I described in the Introduction as underdog literacies, such as online literacies, and cultivate a space where youth can use literacy to be active in their advocacy efforts towards social justice, racial justice, and other DEI issues. Findings from this study indicate a relationship between how marginalized students use social
media and how they enact literacies, such as using language to make changes in their society to advocate for social justice. Critical perspectives, such as Critical Race Theory, Black Crit, LatCrit, and CREE, suggest the need to center race, racism, and racial justice. Similarly, I argue that if BIPOC students are engaged in discussions on social media platforms centered on race, responses to racism, racial justice, social justice aims, and other DEI issues, they are making sense of who they are and how they fit within a society, in return, shaping the identities of Black and Latinx youth. Therefore, this study demonstrates that we can create classroom environments that support the online literacy practices and identity of Black and Latinx students and their advocacy practices enacted through social media literacies. The findings of this investigation lend themselves to explore further how practitioners, at all levels, but primarily middle and high school Language Arts and English educators, could reimagine the ways literacy, and more specifically literacy from critical perspectives, can yield social action. Hence, adopting asset-based pedagogies such as culturally sustaining pedagogy help design and organize classrooms as social communities that serve similar purposes to teens' engagement in social media spaces. Therefore, I consider this study's place in the classroom and scholarship and implications for practitioners, researchers, and teacher educators. To follow, I provide implications for practitioners.

Practitioners

In this section, I provide practitioners with three suggestions for classroom practice including, a) being active themselves, (b); adopting asset-based pedagogies, and (c) cultivating classrooms as social community spaces.

**Being Active.** Teachers could consider how they can take a critical approach to students' literacy experiences in schools, explicitly thinking about teaching literacy in today's present-day
justice movement. More specifically, middle and high school teachers could consider their role in deliberately making social justice a part of their discourse, pedagogy, and content in the spaces they influence. In addition to intentionally addressing racial justice and other diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, teachers could make a conscious decision to know more about how young people, specifically youth of color, engage with literacy practices online and incorporate them into classroom spaces. For example, teachers could reimagine classrooms to cultivate spaces for students to engage in real-world action and advocacy to value teens' social media literacies where they are using language online to create change. To engage in this work, teachers could reimagine reading and writing to consider what literacies are valued, what counts as literacy, what definition of writing we are subscribing to, and what our definitions of what it means to be literate, and whose stories matter. Therefore, this research has implications for teachers' positioning of social media literacies as not underdog literacies, but as worthy of the literacy label, calling for a more inclusive way to define literacy. In the same way that students are active and engaging in social media literacies to advocate for social justice in online spaces, teachers must cultivate similar opportunities for teens to be active in their classrooms, centering their social justice work in the English/Language Arts curriculum. By being active themselves, in their quest for not competing with the world of social media but co-existing with it, teachers can situate their students' literacy practices into advocacy efforts where young people, particularly teens of color, can tap into being active through the various ways literacy allows them to. The following paragraph discusses the benefits of educators adopting asset-based pedagogies.

**Asset-Based Pedagogies.** Teachers can transform standard literacy practices by considering asset-based pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2014), which counter the deficit approaches
to teaching and learning, that view the languages, literacies, and culture of students of color as deficiencies to learning known as the traditional and dominant language, literacy, and cultural ways of being expected in schools in their society. These asset pedagogies, such as culturally relevant/responsive/sustaining pedagogies in English language arts and English education contribute to the role of culture to reimagine literacy and transform practices. By doing so, teachers can create a classroom environment conducive to youths' online literacies. Further, teachers could contemplate their role in bringing youths' social media literacy practices into their classrooms, primarily since the pandemic increased the amount of time young people spend online; it is essential to know how they interact in an ever-changing social media landscape. Thus, asset-based pedagogies enacted by teachers in Language Arts and English classrooms can bridge with youths’ social media literacies through culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP). Paris (2012) argued, “CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster – to sustain – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation” (p. 95). Thus, this study has implications for how middle and high school teachers can support young people, specifically from communities of color, by sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence shown on social media platforms while at the same time teaching traditional and dominant literacy practices and curriculum in Language Arts and English classrooms. When teachers adopt asset-based approaches to their pedagogy, they provide access to dominant practices, such as traditional notions of literacy, while still sustaining home and community practices of youth, in particular youth of color. Asset-pedagogies operate from a lens that views students' home and community culture as resources to honor, explore, and extend (Paris, 2012). Thus, teachers can invite students’ cultural ways, shown on social media platforms, into the classroom for students to maintain their own practices and become even more critically engaged with them, seeing their
practices, lived experiences, and home and community cultures as worthy of being welcomed within the classroom, curriculum and other pedagogical practices of educators. This could help teachers influence student learning and development by promoting socially just, inclusive spaces that uplift marginalized youth's communities and cultural wealth, much like the ones they are engaged with outside of school. With asset-based pedagogies, youth can learn without neglecting cultural notions. This type of education can sustain youth's cultures, combine traditional schooling with youth's cultural funds of knowledge, and engage in transformative work that disrupts systems of injustice, making classrooms more like the social media spaces youth turn to, to advocate for social justice. The following paragraph presents how literacy classrooms can be transformed into community spaces that provide young people with the social aspect they turn to online places for, like social media.

Classrooms as Social Community Spaces. In addition, middle and high school teachers can create a classroom space that fosters community discourse by engaging in critical conversations and enacting action-oriented literacies. To do so, teachers can embrace discourses of a community such as inclusion, diversity, justice in classroom discussion, having critical conversations, and using culturally sustaining pedagogy as a conceptual framework in teaching so classroom communities can be spaces for sustaining culture, cultivating opportunities for advocating for social justice and making sense of their racial identity. For instance, this study shows that the inclusion of marginalized teens in meaningful discussions amplifies their voices. By being invested in youths' social media lives outside of schools and welcoming a culture of social change directed by youth, teachers can create a classroom environment conducive to youths' online literacies, stepping away from seeing them as unsanctioned. To summarize, this work has implications for literacy teachers to engage with and consider the literacy-related
dimensions of diverse populations of children and adolescents and for teachers to take a deep dive into social media’s role in doing so. In the next section, I provide implications for scholars and teacher educators.

**Researchers and Teacher Educators**

Scholars need to rethink educational research, specifically literacy research, with equity issues in mind by investing in how a critical perspective utilizing CRT moves literacy scholarship forward. For example, they can do so by reimagining teacher education programs to focus on equity, justice, and antiracist teaching, engaging in research that attest to social, cultural, and linguistic diversity in literacy scholarship, and enacting approaches that emphasize the transformative power of literacy to promote equity, access, and to enact social change. More research is needed to understand the unique and complex ways teens of color enact literacy practices related to their racialized experiences in social media spaces. There is much to be known about the relationship between marginalized youth and how they choose to use their social media platforms, not just during heightened social justice movements, but also in their lifestyle, to advocate for social justice, racial justice, and other DEI issues. I argue that those literacy practices within the context of social media shaped the various identities of Black and Latinx youth, something educational researchers and teacher educators should be concerned with. To follow, I present suggestions for future research with this study in mind.

**Future Research**

Scholars could continue to explore how youth of color use social media sophisticatedly, including how teens enact literacies to take action towards racial justice and diversity equity and inclusion issues through engagement with virtual communities. Specifically, further research is needed to understand the online writing identities of BIPOC youth and how the multimodal
literacies employed in social media spaces influence teens’ writing for social justice. Engaging in this research will provide further information on how language is used to advocate for social justice. In addition to written language, future research into the ways marginalized youth use oral language on social media to engage in advocacy efforts are important as a follow-up for this study, thus examining how teens' enact speaking on societal issues using social media platforms.

There is also a need to utilize critical frameworks such as critical literacy to understand how BIPOC youth are enacting literacies linked to social justice in social media spaces. Adding to research that draws from critical frameworks, quantitative research can be completed from a QuanCrit (Garcia et al., 2018) stance that approaches quantitative methods to examine how students of color use social media literacies to advocate for social justice across platforms from a critical race theory framework. Further, CRT applications to quantitative methodologies can be completed to study how young people, specifically youth of color, engage with literacy practices online. Thus, as literacy research gets reimagined, a quantitative approach through the critical lens of CRT, has the potential to provide unique and creative possibilities to disrupt racism, promote racial justice, and advance critical race theory while seeking to explain the intersections of literacy and racialized experiences through teens’ social media practices. Thus, reimagining the everyday lived experiences of youth, particularly youth of color.

Further, another framework, such as one rooted in social justice, specifically youth participatory action research, is needed to attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues from the lens of youth of color. Here, researchers and teacher educators can privilege the leadership and knowledge of youth of color as they employ action-oriented efforts towards advocating for social justice on social media. Additionally, this research area focused on how students of color use social media literacies to advocate for social justice, which can be extended by pairing
frameworks such as intersectionality theory with CRT. Here, scholars can expand on the first cross-case theme, *More Than Race: Marginalized Teens’ Intersectionality in Social Media Spaces*, by using a CRT lens paired with intersectionality to explore the intersectional nature of youths' coexisting identities and their experiences of marginalization. Youths' various identities are situated within and beyond their racialized markers; therefore, researchers could attend to the complicated nature of teens' intersections of identities on social media include race and gender, race and sexuality, race and age, race and language, race and nationality, race and class, and race and education. Also, there are implications for scholars to broaden the scope of participants who are youth of color, and continue this work with youth who identify as mixed or biracial youth, to explore if and how youth who racially identify as two or more races, with one being Black or Latinx, enact social media literacies to advocate for social justice and how those unique practices, shape their identities as biracial youth.

This work used case study methods, however, an ethnography and/or ethnographic qualitative research study needs to be completed to hone in on the culture of a larger sample size of marginalized youth to explore how they engage with literacy practices online. Here, researchers can study the individual lived experiences, but distinctive and shared culture of minoritized young people. For example, a study can seek to describe or interpret the shared patterns of marginalized groups and the socio-cultural influences of marginalized youth. Thus, extending the work of the cross-case analysis, which discussed the similarities, differences, and conflicts and contradictory ways that all of the cases used social media to advocate for social justice and enacted literacy practices towards racial justice and other diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. In sum, an ethnographic study can further explore the socially mediated, daily lived experiences of marginalized young people in the literate world of social media.
In sum, notably, more research needs to be done with males, specifically Black and Latinx male participants. In the limitations section of this paper (see methods chapter), I discussed the limitations concerning the limited involvement of young boys of color in this study, two to be exact, and adding to this, there is an opening in the existing scholarship to do so.

**Chapter Summary**

To conclude, the purpose of this study was to illustrate how youth of color engaged in literacies online and ultimately examined how teens used social media literacies to advocate for social justice, highlighting their racialized experiences to do so. I previously established a gap through the literature review within literacy scholarship that failed explicitly to highlight the perspectives and experiences of marginalized youth within social media spaces who engaged in using language in online spaces to make changes in their society. This study attended to this gap. Since this is a view we rarely hear, the purpose of this research was twofold: (a) to understand how minoritized youth, specifically Black and Latinx, engaged in literacy practices online towards social justice; and (b) to understand how minoritized youth enacted agentive literacies in response to their racialized experiences and how those practices shaped their identities as people of color in today's society.

**Conclusion**

Extending and summing up the discussion on how this study adds to existing research, the study is significant and timely and lends itself to fresh ideas for expanding scholarship grounded in culture such as culturally relevant/responsive/sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. Specifically, this study presents an opportunity to create and innovate new and timely conceptual frameworks and asset-based pedagogies that center the culture of BIPOC and other marginalized communities. One way of doing so is through a *culturally digitized pedagogy*, a term that I coin
to focus on how online spaces such as social media offer a platform for cultural talk centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and issues. A *culturally digitized* platform provides a community space to educate and share the culture of BIPOC and other marginalized communities. The second is a *culturally active pedagogy*, another coined term that focuses on how teens' active engagement in advocacy transforms culture for a more just society. These culturally-infused digital and action-oriented ideas for frameworks and pedagogical approaches encourage continued exploration of the possibilities related to the integration of culture and diverse populations and support how the unique research findings advance our knowledge of how young people, specifically youth of color, engage with literacy practices online. Thus, a *culturally digitized pedagogy* and a *culturally active pedagogy* are significant and timely, just as this research, and adds significant contributions to the literature, filling a gap within existing scholarship and adding to this research's uniqueness. I plan to further conceptualize these two pedagogies moving forward. Thus, this dissertation has positioned me to engage with and consider the literacy-related aspects of diverse populations of teens, where these two frameworks can help us understand the intersections of literacy, social media, and young people's racialized experiences, and ways to enact them. In conclusion, the findings advance our knowledge of how young people engage with literacy practices online, specifically by highlighting the perspectives and experiences of marginalized students within social media spaces; this study contributes a new perspective, one where youth use language to make changes in their society, representative of a new path for literacy scholarship. Through their literacy practices online, youth become champions of antiracism who advocate for justice for marginalized people. They also enacted identities related to activists, as their social media literacies create change-makers out of them, adding to the liberation of marginalized people's lives.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL ONE

Name ______________________________ Time ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What does social media mean to you?</td>
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<td>2. What are the ways you engage on social media (phone, computer, public library)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How long have you been on social media? What platforms have you used? What other platforms have you been on? Describe your experiences with social media. How do you use it? Why do you use it? What are the benefits and constraints?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What race do you assume to be? How do you identify yourself racially/culturally?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Do you think how you identify yourself racially impacts what you compose/post/share on social media?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Does your race shape how, why you write/post/share on social media? If so, how?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. How would you explain your reading/writing experiences as a Black/Brown adolescent to someone else? How would you explain your social media experiences as a Black/Brown adolescent to someone else? How would you explain what you use your social media for to someone else?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Has social media helped you think about what it means to be a Black/Brown teen in the world right now? If so, how? How has that changed over time? Have you changed as a writer on social media over time? How? What has social media done for you? What are the limitations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. What has been the biggest opportunity, thus far, in your growth as a Black/ Brown content creator or composer?</td>
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<td>10. What has been the biggest obstacle, thus far, in your growth as a Black/ Brown content creator?</td>
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<td>11. Do you see any connection from your lived experiences</td>
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<td>to the way you engage in literacy practices? If so, what? What about from your social media platform to your understanding of the broad categories of literacies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. How would you describe yourself as a reader, writer, literacy composer, content creator? Tell me how you have engaged in social media in the past. Can you share a social media memory/or a post from 2020 or 2021 that is memorable to you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Which part of using social media platforms do you find the most beneficial and why? Which is the least? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Do you think writing on social media counts as reading and writing? Why or why not? Is social media valued at your school? How has that social media writing/reading experience connected with your school reading/writing experiences, if at all?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Describe how you plan to use your social media platform. What do you typically post/repost/share/compose via social media?</td>
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<td>16. Does social media help you question, and think deeply and carefully about your experiences, perceptions, and literacy practices? What does that reflection look like? What does it mean to you to be reflective?</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Do social media platforms provide you an opportunity to learn about how you read and write? In contrast, how do you use social media platforms to find out more about how you prefer to read and write? Do social media platforms provide you an opportunity to learn about yourself? Your identity, who you are, as a Black or Brown young person in today’s society?</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Have you shared your social media content with any of your friends and/or teachers/ instructors, or parents? If so, what was their response?</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Is there anything else that you would like to share?</td>
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</table>
### APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TWO

**Name ______________________________ Time __________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are you finding most beneficial from your use of your personal</td>
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<td>social media platform right now? Least? Why?</td>
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<td>2. What are you learning about the injustices of Black people in society?</td>
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<td>Have you used social media to express your thoughts/ideas about racial</td>
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<td>injustice? If so, talk about that experience. What were the</td>
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<td>affordances/constraints? What are you learning about yourself? As a</td>
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<td>literacy composer, content creator, and Black/Brown adolescent? Has your</td>
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<td>race impacted your practices on social media? If so, how?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Have you shared your social media content with any of your friends</td>
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<td>and/or teachers/ instructors, or parents? If so, what was their</td>
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<td>response?</td>
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<td>4. Bring an artifact from your social media content. Tell me about the</td>
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<td>artifact you brought today from your social media content. Talk about</td>
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<td>that artifact. Why did you choose it? How does it represent you? Your</td>
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<tr>
<td>identity? Your experiences? Your development as a literacy composer?</td>
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<td>5. Have experiences from your own life influenced your perceptions of</td>
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<td>race? injustice? Your idea of what counts as literacy? If so, how?</td>
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<td>6. Do you see any connection from your lived experiences to the way you</td>
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<tr>
<td>engage in literacy practices? What about from your social media</td>
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<td>platform to your understanding of the broad categories of literacies?</td>
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<td>7. What story can you share about a moment in your social media journey</td>
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<td>that connected to race relations?</td>
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<td>8. How would you describe yourself as a literacy consumer (receiver) and</td>
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<td>composer (creator)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Describe your literacy knowledge. To you what counts as literacy? What</td>
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<tr>
<td>counts as literacy in school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?</td>
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### APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL THREE

Name ______________________________ Time __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Talk about your experience on social media platforms over the course of this study. How does it feel to use social media platforms to express yourself? Describe the experience of composing via social media. What role did the context of social media play in your ability to use different types of literacies, ways of composing, and expressing yourself (if any)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Do you see any connection from your everyday experiences or life experiences to the way you read, write, and communicate on social media? What about social media platforms help you understand reading and writing past traditional ways of doing so?</td>
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<td>3. Describe any shifts in how you view literacy as a result of your social media use.</td>
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<td>4. How would you describe yourself as a reader, writer, content creator/composer now? Can you share a composing memory from this year? Would you describe that memory as positive or negative? Why? How would you describe yourself as a Black/ Brown individual? Has your race impacted your practices on social media? If so, how?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Which part of using social media platforms do you find the most beneficial and why? Which is the least? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Talk to me about how you feel in control of what you do in terms of your social media activity. What does ownership, control, and independence look like online? Do you feel in charge of what you post and upload and the different activities you do online? Is this different from how much control and ownership you have or have had in school? Does anything about social media spaces/platforms help you reflect on your experiences in your life, perceptions on things, and the literacy practices initiated by you?</td>
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<td>7. What did you learn about your literacy practices? Did this experience extend your knowledge on what counts as</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. What story can you share about a moment in your social media journey that connected to race relations?</td>
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<td>9. What experiences from social media platforms stand out the most to you and why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Have you shared your social media content with any of your friends and/or teachers/ instructors, or parents? If so, what was their response?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Has your experience with social media platforms inspired you to take any action related to social justice, equality, reform, or any other race based efforts? Looking ahead, do you anticipate your engagement with social media sites impacting the type of literacies you engage in? If so, how? Do you anticipate that you will continue using social media platforms in the future? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Is there anything else that you would like to share?</td>
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Note: These last interviews served as opportunities to ask questions that came up from the ongoing analysis I engaged in and allowed me to engage in member checking.
APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL OF POSTED CONTENT

When adolescents upload or post content such as images and videos to their feed, profile page, stories, or channel, I will observe their multimodal content based on this protocol. In addition, I intend to carefully watch teens' content via video, audio, and other multimedia data. It is important to note that I will only observe public content; I will not ask for private or direct messages between participants and their followers or others. Further, I plan to save observable data via using mobile device features screenshots, screen recording, and using the embedded save feature available on some platforms (i.e., Instagram). In my field notes of observations, I will describe what I notice and note how many times it happens.

Reflecting on Racialized Experiences

When adolescents analyze/reflect on the decisions they made about certain posts/content When adolescents related something from their personal lives and lived experiences to their posts/content 
When adolescents reflected on their perceptions of race relations, culture, or their overall minoritized experiences 
When adolescents make a connection from their lived experiences grounded in race to something in their posts, uploads, content 
When adolescents related something they uploaded/posted/composed to their identity

Literacy Practices

When adolescents enact and engage in literacy practices and create literacies 
When adolescents compose digitally, nontraditionally, or in multimodal ways 
When adolescents compose traditionally, in school-like ways
When adolescents illustrated sophisticated literacy practices connected to their identity as Black or Brown teens, or identities as readers/writers/composers and content creators

**Autonomy and Agency**

- When adolescents’ initiated literacy practices
- When adolescents show autonomy and/or personal agency
- When adolescents’ took an action towards racialized injustice, or talked about wanting to take action, based on their racialized experiences, perceptions, and daily lived experiences
- When adolescents’ mentioned why/how/if they took action

**General**

- When adolescents comment, reply, and share with others publicly through social media
- Record how many times teens post, topics posted