ABSTRACT

GRAY, ASHLEY MARIE. Doing the Right Something: A Grounded Theory Approach to Understanding Advocacy and Allyship among College Students. (Under the direction of Dr. Joy Gaston Gayles).

Institutions of higher education strive to create a diverse, inclusive, and civically engaged student body. Encouraging students to critically engage in social justice enhances the ability of universities to achieve these desired outcomes and empirical studies link activism to greater gains in civic engagement and democratic ideas later in life (Mayhew, Bowman, Rockenbach, Seifert, & Wolniak, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Advocacy and allyship provide avenues of participation for students to critically engage in social justice and subsequently practice civic engagement through aligning their values and actions. Advocacy is the process of taking actions to end oppression of one’s own marginalized group, while allyship is the process of taking actions to end oppression of another marginalized group with in which a person does not have membership.

While previous scholarship addresses the development of social justice values, there is relatively little empirical research that addresses the process of translating these values into social justice activism. The small literature base that does address the process of social justice activism for college students does not give attention toward understanding how students develop a commitment to both advocacy and allyship. Thus, this study fills a gap in the literature. Through using a constructivist grounded theory approach, I developed a substantive theory that addresses the process by which undergraduate college students with one or more marginalized identities engage in both advocacy and allyship.

To create my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship, I used the technique of theoretical sampling to conduct two rounds of interviews with ten participants and collected
observational data. In keeping with grounded theory methods, I immersed myself in the data while simultaneously analyzing it. Participants in this study attended one of two large public universities in the Southeast, held at least one marginalized identity, and took actions that related to both advocacy and allyship.

I conclude that advocacy and allyship is a continual and evolving process in which college student activists consistently return to Doing the Right Something, the core category of this process. The process of advocacy and allyship consists of six additional categories: Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected, and Experiencing Affirmation. Additionally, Sociopolitical Climate and Identity represent two influencing factors that affect and shape the process of advocacy and allyship. A substantive theory holds both theoretical and practical implications.

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship enhances the theoretical understanding of intersectional identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and in-group activist and ally development. In addition, my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship offers practical relevance for student affairs professionals who support students as they engage in advocacy and allyship on college campuses and as they encourage the student body to align their social justice values to action. Finally, my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship holds pedagogical relevance for graduate student affairs programs and helps inform structural changes that may increase activism on campus.
Doing the Right Something: A Grounded Theory Approach to Understanding Advocacy and Allyship among College Students.

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Research and Policy Analysis

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DEDICATION

To my participants who show up and fight injustice.

To all people who work for liberation.

and

To Mary and Lola

who encourage and love me.
BIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A central purpose of the American higher education system is to develop an informed, mature, and active citizenry (Hamrick, 1998; Jacoby, 2017; Kezar, 2010; Rhoads, 1998). Several studies contribute to the conventional knowledge that attending college increases basic civic outcomes for students throughout their college and post-college career (Mayhew, Bowman, Rockenback, Seifert, & Wolniak, 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Recent empirical studies continue to support the positive correlation between general attendance in college and an increase in civic and social justice attitudes at large. Studies correlate the college experience to developing an informed citizenry, encouraging participation, having positive interaction within a heterogeneous and complex society, and increasing the cognitive ability of society to engage in perspective taking and adopt a more pluralistic worldview (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda & Lopez, 2004; Smith, D., 2015; Zuniga, Williams, & Berger, 2005). However, recent empirical studies also suggest that an increase in social justice attitudes does not always translate to an increase in civic and social justice action (Hillygus, 2005; Hinrichs, 2011; O'Neil, 2012; Pascarella, Salisbury, Martin, & Blaich, 2012; Sax, 2004). If one of the main goals of American higher education system is to create a mature, civically engaged citizenry then it is important to examine processes that may increase civic engagement both in college and later in life and furthermore gain a deeper understanding of these processes.

By transforming values into action, the process of social justice activism offers an avenue for students to practice civic engagement while in college, which may lead to more sustained civic engagement later in life (Biddix, Somers & Polman, 2009; Hamrick, 1998; Hunters, 1998; Page, 2010). My research specifically examines the process of student
activism related to advocacy and allyship. *Advocacy* refers to taking actions to end oppression of one’s own group and *allyship* refers to taking actions to end oppression of another marginalized group in which a person does not have membership (Patel, 2011). Advocacy and allyship have been part of the college landscape since the inception of the American university system and currently, college campuses are experiencing a resurgence of activism similar to that of the 1960s (Broadhurst, 2014; Eagan, Stolzenberg, Bates, Aragon, Suchard, & Rios-Aguilar, 2015; Jacoby, 2017; Rhoads, 1998). Despite the history and current relevancy of student activism, little is known about the process in which students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship. By not understanding the process of advocacy and allyship, student affairs professionals are not fully equipped to address, support, and encourage activism on campus.

The scant literature that does address the process of connecting social justice beliefs to social justice actions primarily focuses on either in-group activist development (Renn, 2007; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011) or ally development (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005; Washington & Evans, 1991). To date, no scholarship examines how students develop a commitment to both advocacy and allyship. With an increase understanding of intersectional identity and intersecting systems of oppression (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Jones & Abes, 2013), it is important to examine how students commit to and engage in both advocacy and allyship.

Acknowledging that students enter college with intersecting privileged and marginalized identities, it is reasonable to assume that students who do take part in activism increasingly find themselves occupying intersectional spaces. Consequently, while informative, in-group activist and ally development models may inadequately address the
process of student activism as it relates to fighting oppression that marginalized communities face because they do not take into account intersecting identities. My study fills the gap in the literature by using a constructivist grounded theory approach to understand how undergraduate college students with one or more marginalized identities commit to and engage in both advocacy and allyship.

By uncovering and naming the process of advocacy and allyship, my study illuminates how student affairs professionals can support students who partake in advocacy and allyship, increase involvement in advocacy and allyship in the student body, and provide guidance for administrators who respond to student activist efforts on their campus. My substantive theory on advocacy and allyship also contains pedagogical relevancy for graduate student affairs programs as they prepare future higher education professionals to respond to activism on their campuses. For the remainder of the introduction, I explain the purpose and research question that guided my study. I then clarify terminology and expand upon the theoretical and practical significance that contributes to the importance of my study. Finally, I explain my constructivist grounded theory approach to inquiry.

**Purpose of this Study**

Student participation in activism is associated with greater leadership development in the individual student (Page, 2010) and represents the democratic ideals of higher education (Biddix et al., 2009; Hamrick, 1998; Page, 2010). Yet, little research has focused on how students commit to and engage in activist causes, whether and how marginalized and privileged identities play a role in student activism, and the idiosyncrasies associated with modern day advocacy and allyship.
Although the research efforts of some scholars to examine characteristics and belief patterns in college student activism (e.g., Block, Haan & Smith, 1969, 1969; Rhoads, 1997; Sutherland, 1981) are informative, they may be outdated. Furthermore, these studies do not address questions of why and how students engage in activism. By focusing on the intertwined process of both advocacy and allyship, my purpose in this study was to develop a substantive theory on advocacy and allyship in college students that enhances the understanding of how students develop a commitment to fight oppression of their own marginalized groups and other marginalized groups in which the student does not have membership. My research on advocacy and allyship and my substantive theory revealed theoretical and practical implications for all higher education professionals concerned with fostering a critically engaged and a socially just student body.

**Research Question**

In this research, I explored the processes that contributed to a student’s activism as it relates to advocacy and allyship and generated a substantive theory to connect these processes. The following research question guided my efforts to create my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship:

How do undergraduate college students with one or more marginalized identities commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship?

**Terminology**

Before progressing to a discussion of the significance of my study, I would like to draw attention to my intentional word choices. One well-documented challenge in discussing diversity and social justice issues concerns language. Often people engaged in diversity-related conversations without a shared, unified definition of some of the most
common terms. Furthermore, people often proceed with these challenging conversations believing that others share their same definitions of terms despite evidence that suggest otherwise (Manning, 2009). To avoid this common pitfall, I am choosing to define my most frequently used terms early in my manuscript. I also illustrate the evolution of these terms to provide context of my definitions. Specifically, for this study, it is important to clarify the terms *oppression, marginalized, privileged, activist, allies, advocacy, and allyship*.

It is first essential to define *oppression* because this study explicitly examines how college students engage in anti-oppression work. *Oppression* describes an asymmetrical power relationship in which subordinate groups suffer the “consequence of deprivation, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, control of culture and sometimes even violence” (Prilleltensky, 2008, p. 126). When students act to end oppression for a specific group, they may identify with the oppressed, or *marginalized*, group or they may identify with the dominant, or *privileged*, group. *Activists* and *allies* are individuals who take actions to end oppression for marginalized groups. The word *activist* is traditionally linked to anyone who takes anti-oppression action regardless of their identity and the word *ally* is traditionally linked to individuals with privileged group status who take anti-oppression action with or on behalf of a subordinate group for the greater good of society. Finally, *advocacy* and *allyship* refer to actions taken to end oppression, which I explicitly link to membership in the marginalized or privileged group. Consequently, the identity of individuals undergirds the distinctions between activist and allies, and between advocacy and allyship. In the paragraphs below, I detail my logic behind these intentional word choices and highlight important distinctions between these terms.
Oppression

For the purposes of this study, I am interested in the process through which a student takes actions to fight any oppressive structures that treat humans like animals, restrict distinctly human traits, or stifle human nature. In his foundational work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) argued that fundamentally, oppressed groups live with restraints that hinder their ability to be fully human. In other words, oppression creates a social reality in which some groups have the power to pursue a fully human life while other groups are limited in their power to do so. Frye (1983) explained:

The experience of oppressed people is that the living of one’s life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction (p. 48).

Different from prejudicial treatment, oppression is a result of historical, political, and social structures in which groups with power use it to limit the ability of entire groups of people to live as fully human.

Prejudice describes a person's negative, incomplete, and ungrounded belief toward another group. Based on prejudicial beliefs, discrimination describes a negative treatment of an individual by another person (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004). Individuals from privileged groups may experience discrimination or prejudicial treatment; however, these experiences are not oppressive (Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 1997). While all people may experience prejudice and discrimination, only individuals who are members of a marginalized group experience oppression (Johnson, 2006).
A critical concept in understanding oppression is that oppression is the result of power and privilege combined in such a way that limits the ability of a particular group to be fully human and to live a good human life (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Freire, 1970; Johnson, 2006). Oppression occurs because one group consciously or unconsciously exercises their power in order to disenfranchise and marginalize another particular group (Dermer, Smith, & Barto, 2010). The fight against oppression is a fight to disrupt and dismantle this use of power.

When critically examining historic and current political structures, a pattern emerges that demonstrates how an imbalance of power is used to disfranchise, marginalize, and thus oppress specific groups. For example, in the United States, the historical institution of slavery oppressed African Americans, the denial of the vote oppressed women and African Americans, and the denial of same-sex marriage oppressed non-heterosexual couples. In each of these cases, groups of people were limited in their ability to fully pursue a good human life as defined by established norms in the United States. In each of these cases, laws restricted the rights of certain groups to fully participate in society. Although policy makers dismantled these laws, the negative consequences of these historical, oppressive structures still affect the marginalization of specific groups today (Loury, 1998).

Modern oppressive structures in the United States include voter identification laws; stop and frisk policies; limited, unpaid maternity leave; the denial of federal protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals; and tax codes that disproportionately favor wealthier families. Although people with different political ideologies may argue whether or not the above-mentioned policies are dehumanizing, activists who argue to demolish these laws and structures often base their arguments under
the belief that these structures are distinctively oppressive. In addition to tangible oppressive laws and structures, less obvious forms of oppression also dehumanize groups of people.

Traditional knowledge about dehumanization derived from an effort to understand horrific acts such as slavery and genocide. Social psychologist claimed that for genocide to occur, a group in power must view another group as less than human. Dehumanization occurs because of the ability to "morally disengage from [another group], justifying treating them as animals, and undermining the legitimacy of their views and needs" (Bain, Vaes & Leyens, 2013, p. 2). Current scholarly work on dehumanization does not solely focus on obvious forms of oppression but also examines the subtle forms of oppression.

Scholars initially debated on what makes humans distinct from other animals in order to understand subtle forms of dehumanization. Kagan (2004) set forth seven characteristics that make humans distinctly human. These characteristics include the ability to infer varied thoughts and feelings in others; to use symbolic language; to understand moral concepts; a greater capacity to recall the past and imagine the future; to seek novelty; and to family plan.

The term *infrahumanziation* describes the subtle denial of humanness that results from limiting distinctly human characteristics, such as those named above (Bain et al., 2013; Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003). Thus, any formal or informal structures that limit a person’s ability to participate in any of these actions represents a form of infrahumanziation that is consequently oppressive because these structures limit the ability of a group to be fully human. While infrahumanziation expands the boundaries of dehumanizing actions, there are still more ways in which groups experience dehumanization.

Haslam (2006) argued that in addition to dehumanizing others based on treating them as animals and/or denying them their distinctive human qualities, society dehumanizes others
by limiting their human nature. Haslam claimed that our human nature shares some qualities with other animals. For example, feelings of happiness and sadness are not uniquely human, but these emotions are a part of our human nature. When any group restricts another group's basic human nature, these actions are still dehumanizing and thus oppressive. Marginalized groups experience oppression of their human nature through microaggressions, microinvalidations and microinequities. Examples include off-putting looks and condescending interactions that subtly suggest to an individual of a marginalized group that they are less than (Bastian & Haslam, 2011; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007).

**Marginalized and Privileged**

*Marginalized* (sometimes called subordinate, minority, minoritized, or targeted) groups refer to people that historically have been, and continue to be, systematically oppressed. In contrast, *privileged* groups are groups that historically have been, and continue to be, systematically advantaged (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2013; Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 2013). Freire (1970) used the term *oppressor* instead of privileged to make his argument that we live in an objective reality in which one group is oppressed and the other group is the oppressor. While I agree with objective reality Freire sets forth, I do not use the term oppressor. I instead choose the term *privileged* because it more accurately captures the idea of unearned systematic advantage based on group membership that certain groups receive regardless of their intention (Adams & Zúñiga, 2016).

McIntosh (1990) described two types of privilege. One type of privilege constitutes an unearned advantage that should be granted to everyone regardless of identity and a second type of privilege concerns conferred dominance that should be erased from society.
Conferred dominance refers to the exercise of power that one group uses to systematically dominate another group. Black and Stone (2005) described five components that define privilege. First, privilege is a special advantage. Second, privilege is granted and not earned. Third, privilege is an entitlement to a preferred status. Fourth, privilege is used unconsciously or consciously to benefit the recipient at the detriment of the other. Finally, privilege may or may not be in the awareness of the person who has it. I use privileged to describe membership in the dominant group that has systematic advantages in society. Individuals of a privileged group may use their privilege in different ways; nonetheless, a person cannot give up their membership in a privileged group, just as a person cannot give up their membership in a marginalized group.

Tatum (2013) argues that society categorizes groups and creates a system of otherness where one category of other is dominant (or privileged) and the other group is subordinate (or marginalized). These categories are: race and ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability. Using these seven categories, marginalized groups include the following: people of color; women; transgendered and gender non-conforming people; non-Christian people of faith or no faith; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) individuals; people of low socioeconomic status; minors and the elderly; and people with disabilities. Privileged groups include: whites; men; Christians; heterosexuals; cisgendered people; people of middle to upper socioeconomic status; adults; and able-bodied individuals (Hardiman et al., 2013; Tatum, 2013).

At the time of my study, every participant that I selected to interview was acting to end oppression for at least one marginalized group in which they share membership and was acting to end oppression for at least one marginalized group in which they did not share
membership. When a student is fighting oppression of their own marginalized group, they are participating in advocacy. When a student is fighting oppression in a category in which they share privileged identity, they are participating in allyship. Although my study is uniquely concerned with understanding advocacy and allyship, it is important to explore the terms of activist and ally because of their relationship to advocacy and allyship and because these terms are traditionally used to describe the general phenomena of activism.

**Activists and Allies**

I am interested in how students commit and engage in both advocacy and allyship, which requires some form of action from the student. Central to the concept of action is the noun activist. The term activist most commonly refers to anyone, regardless of identity, who is trying to change the status quo (Broadhurst, 2014; Rhoads, 1998). In the general sense, there are many different types of activists. Examples include: animal rights activists, environmental activists, political activists, and human rights activists. My study is concerned with college student activists who act to end oppression of marginalized groups.

Fundamentally, my study is concerned with how students with both marginalized and privileged identities commit to both advocacy and allyship. I intentionally use advocacy and allyship because these words are action-oriented and highlight the choices students make in fighting oppression. When I use the term activist, I am referring to students in general who take anti-oppressive actions. I use the word in-group activist when it is important to distinguish students who take anti-oppressive action for a marginalized group in which they share membership. I use the word ally when it is important to distinguish students who take anti-oppressive action for a marginalized group in which they do not share membership. With
a clear understanding of terminology, I now move to expand on the significance of my research.

**Significance**

Postsecondary institutions have expressed commitment to social justice and to fostering democratic and civic engagement ideals. In a report commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and University, Dey, Ott, Antonaros, Barnhardt, and Holsapple (2010) studied twenty-three institutions of higher education and found that the encouragement of both personal and social responsibilities in students represent core commitments for universities, as evidenced by their espoused values and efforts. Dey et al. described how contributing to the larger community, taking seriously the perspectives of others, and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action are significant factors in these core commitments. Dey et al. reasoned:

With a majority of Americans being guided toward higher education, we [colleges and universities] have an unparalleled opportunity to take education for mindful citizenship to a much higher level of purpose, scope, and demonstrated accomplishment. [The] Core Commitments study and the AAC&U [Association of American College and Universities] membership study demonstrate that higher education is poised to seize this opportunity (p.x).

Dey et al. stressed that institutions must focus on explicit actions to increase the success of these espoused democratic goals. Although administrators initially viewed activism as detrimental to the college experience, administrators are increasingly considering activism as developmental because activism connects action to values (Biddix et al., 2009).
Consequently, supporting and encouraging student activism is one explicit action universities can take to foster more mindful and purposeful citizenship.

There is robust evidence to suggest that the United States higher education system has a strong history in creating social progress (Guthrie, Jones, Osteen & Hu, 2013; Hurtado, 2007). Barnhardt (2012) suggest that student activism is “a strong signal that the campus's conditions have been ripe for students to integrate their knowledge, skills, and identities with a broader appreciation for the process of civic engagement upon which democratic participation is based” (p. 8). Indeed, following President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration, NASPA president Kevin Kruger sent a statement condemning the President's action (personal communication, January 30, 2017). Included in this letter was the PDF, *Five Things Student Affairs Professionals Can Do to Institutionalize Civic Engagement*, authored by Sponsler & Hartley (2013). Sponsler and Hartley argued that universities should recognize how successful civic engagement efforts are an expression of the central mission of the institution. My study is significant because my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship helps universities support successful civic engagement in students who wish to change systems of oppression. My research is also extremely relevant because campuses across the country continue to experience a surge of activism (Eagan et al., 2015; Wong, 2015).

**Relevancy**

Advocacy and allyship offer an avenue for students to relate to others who are different from themselves, engage in and recognize the complex process of social change, and become better aware of their own marginalized and privileged identities. Recent events underscore how student activism is not just a 1960s pastime. Wong (2015) argues that
universities are experiencing a renaissance of student activism. Students continue to have numerous and seemingly growing opportunities to participate in activism focused on ending oppression for many marginalized groups. According to University of California-Los Angeles’s Higher Education Research Institute’s Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), 8.5% of first year students in 2015 indicated they had a ‘very good chance’ of participating in student protest. This is the highest level of predictive activism since 1967 (Eagan et al., 2015). This prediction appears to be correct because students across the country are creating lists of demands to end systematic and structural racism and other forms of oppression on campus (The Demands, 2016).

In the state of North Carolina, where my study took place, student protests are increasing. Since 2013, college students have frequented a weekly protest at the State Capitol known as Moral Mondays (Berman, 2013). In February 2015, the shooting of three Muslim students (two enrolled at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and one enrolled at North Carolina State University) sparked an international cry to end Islamophobia (Talbot, M., 2015). On November 19, 2015, protesters at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill disrupted a town hall meeting to issue a list of 45 demands related to racism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism (A Collective Response to Anti-Blackness, 2015). In spring of 2016, students at Duke University occupied an administrative building in response to the investigation of a top administrator charged with hitting a person of color who was contracted by Duke as a parking attendant (Moorthy, 2016). Following the passing of House Bill 2 on March 23, 2016, students across the state staged sit-ins to protest this bill because it restricts rights for LGBTQ people (Camp, 2016). In fall 2016, students across the state held “die-ins,” a form of protest in which students lied down as if dead, and participated in other
forms of protest after two back-to-back public shootings of Terence Crutcher and Keith Scott, both Black males (Brown & Hoggard, 2016; Inge, 2016).

Furthermore, activism on college campuses continue to increase following the election of Trump. Immediately following the election of Trump, students from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University protested ‘white America’ and demonstrated solidarity for a number of oppressed groups (Dent, 2016; Owens, 2016). Since the election of Trump, protests that were either organized by college students or had a large number of college students in attendance include: the 2017 and 2018 Women's Marches at cities across the state; demonstrations at airports and on campus following Executive Order 13769, a since-blocked ban on residents of primarily Muslim countries from entering the United States; solidarity demonstrations with the tragedy following the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia; displays of support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients following the rescission of the program in September 2017; and awareness campaigns corresponding with the national #MeToo anti-sexual assault and harassment movement (Billman, 2017).

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the prevalence of student activism against oppression of marginalized groups. While we know that students across the country are acting to end oppression, we know relatively little about how students commit to both advocacy and allyship and even less about their experience as in-group activist and allies.

**Importance of Understanding Advocacy and Allyship**

Some scholars have developed content or identity-specific models to explain why students with certain marginalized backgrounds may commit to advocacy (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016; Hope, Keels, & Durkee, 2016; Renn, 2007). Scholars also have
developed ally models to explain, in a broad sense, how students come to participate in allyship (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006). However, none of the research to date explicitly accounts for intersecting identities by examining how students commit to both advocacy and allyship. Despite the growing emphasis for social justice on college campuses and a desire for students to critically engage in social issues, there is a gap in scholarship that addresses why and how students navigate their intersecting privileged and marginalized identities through advocacy and allyship efforts.

Jones (2009) explained unique ways that students with both marginalized and privileged identities begin to develop their understanding of self. In her analysis of intersectionality, Jones illuminated a self-authoring process in which students navigate “the tensions between privileged and oppressed identities” (Jones, 2009, p. 287). A growing body of literature makes clear that we have multiple identities and the salience of each of our identities fluctuate throughout our lives (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Jones & Abes, 2013; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Linder & Rodriguez, 2012; Reynolds & Pope, 1991). There is also a growing recognition that students often have both marginalized and privileged identities (Bedolla, 2007; Jones & Abes, 2013). I offer myself as an example to illustrate this point.

I am a queer, white, able-bodied, Unitarian Universalist, middle class, and an educated adult. I am not just queer or just white. My identities have had relative saliency, or relative importance, throughout my life. My identities also represent membership in privileged and marginalized groups. My privileged group memberships include: white, able-bodied, middle class, educated, and young adult. My marginalized group memberships include: queer (both in sexuality and gender) and Unitarian Universalist.
The recognition of multiple identities is strikingly absent in activist and ally literature. An acknowledgement that students exist on college campuses with intersecting privileged and marginalized identities is inherent in understanding a student’s development toward advocacy for their own communities and allyship for other communities. Students who demonstrate a commitment toward advocacy for their own communities and allyship for other communities face unique challenges because they must grapple with power that marginalizes them in some ways and yet privileges them in other ways.

Droogendyk, Wright, Lubensky, and Louis (2016) explained the challenges between balancing the need for marginalized groups to generate their own anti-oppression movements and liberation with the desire of advantaged group allies to support these efforts. Droogendyk et al. argued that allies run a real risk of committing misguided activism due to their privilege, which can damage the liberation of oppressed groups. Although Droogendyk et al. describe some tangible actions allies can take when fighting alongside marginalized groups, their study does not account for how allies may be marginalized in other aspects of society. For example, a white lesbian who engages in allyship for racial justice may have a very different experience than a white, heterosexual male who engages in allyship for racial justice. Students who participate in both advocacy and allyship may find themselves simultaneously fighting for more power in society while also using the power afforded to them by their privileged status to change systems of oppression affecting other marginalized groups. The central purpose of my study was to understand this experience and understand the processes that influence a student’s commitment to participation in both advocacy and allyship. Through taking a more intersectional and processes-oriented approach to
understanding advocacy and allyship, my research offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of higher education.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Filling the gap in ally and activism literature, this study explores how students develop a commitment to both advocacy (advocating for self) and allyship (advocating for others). Ultimately, I propose a substantive theory for advocacy and allyship to illustrate how students commit to and engage in efforts to fight oppression. My substantive theory provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, my research increases knowledge about the activist experience. Practically, student affairs professionals can use my theory as a guide in their efforts to encourage their students towards advocacy and allyship. I briefly discuss my theoretical and practical contributions here and significantly expand on implications of my research in Chapter Five.

Theoretical Contribution

Most research to this point has focused on historical and quantitative analysis of activism on college campuses (Block, Haan & Smith, 1969; Broadhurst, 2014; Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014; Crocetti, Jahromi, & Meeus, 2012; Gibson, T., 2008; Hope et al., 2016; Kimball, Moore, Vaccaro, Troiano & Newman, 2016; Ojala, 2012). While it is certainly helpful to name characteristics and beliefs that correlate to involvement in student activism, it is also important to uncover why and how these characteristics and beliefs develop. By taking a qualitative approach to inquiry, my research contributes to a richer understanding of how and why students commit to and engage in anti-oppression work.

Qualitative research is uniquely poised to provide richer analysis to questions of why and how because its main objective is to “understand how people make sense out of their
lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making and describe how people interpret what they experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). In other words, “qualitative inquiry and reporting resist bullet-point simplicity in favor of contextualized complexity” (Patton, 2015, p. 34). Specifically, my research and the substantive theory of advocacy and allyship that I generated from it offers theoretical contributions in four areas: symbolic interactionism, intersectional identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and in-group and allyship development.

The first theoretical contribution of my research concerns central tenants of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the mutually influencing relationship between societal structures and individuals who make up society (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Miller, 1982). When combined with symbolic interactionism, my theory on advocacy and allyship offers insights into how oppressive norms may be disrupted or dismantled by individual activist efforts. Second, my research contains theoretical contributions to the growing field of intersectionality. I explicitly set out to explore the complexities of multiple intersecting identities and their relationship to advocacy and allyship. Consequently, my research offers theoretical contributions to intersectional literature by adding the components of agency and activism to this literature.

Third, my theory progresses the understanding of Critical Consciousness Theory initially set forth by Freire (1970) by specifically addressing how students move from becoming aware of oppression to taking action. The final theoretical contribution of my study concerns in-group activist and ally development. A significant limitation of current in-group activists and ally-development models is that they implicitly or explicitly treat privileged and marginalized identities as two distinct categories of group membership in the
United States. Consequently, they perpetuate an idea that privileged and marginalized group membership are monolithic entities where a person is either all privilege or all marginalized (Jones & Abes, 2013). However, as I previously discussed, students hold both privileged and marginalized identities. My theory of advocacy and allyship progresses the work of in-group activist and ally development by taking an intersectional approach to understanding how students commit to and engage in anti-oppression work related to their marginalized and privileged identities.

**Practical Contribution**

In addition to the goal of generating theory, grounded theory methods have a pragmatic orientation with the goal of producing theory that has practical utility (Charmaz, 2014; Silverman & Patterson, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). In many ways, pragmatism represents the union of knowledge and action (Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, & Usher, 2013). A pragmatic approach is one that emphasis process, change, and probabilistic outcomes and then contextually situates any findings (Charmaz, 2014). In studying advocacy and allyship and specifically through my substantive theory, I offer practical knowledge derived from situational evidence for any higher education professionals dedicated to encouraging students toward involvement in anti-oppression work.

Anecdotally, from my own work facilitating various diversity and inclusion workshops and participating social justice efforts, I often hear from others *so what, what can I do next?* In other words, once people are aware of social injustice and are dedicated to fighting it, they often want to know how to fight oppressive systems (Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 1997). In my experience, coming up with actions to dismantle oppression is perhaps the hardest part of anti-oppression work. I always try to conclude my workshops by normalizing
the difficulty in creating tangible and impactful steps that can dismantle oppression, providing a chance for participants to explore their agency and begin to formulate an action plan. My research approach is similar. After examining factors that contribute to advocacy and allyship, I concluded my research by providing some concrete recommendations for faculty and student affairs professionals who want to move students toward advocacy and allyship.

My research offers practical contributions in four main areas. First, my research offers guidance for higher education professionals who support students engaged in advocacy and allyship. Second, my research offers direction for higher educational professionals who want to encourage more students to participate in advocacy and allyship. Third, my research offers pedagogical considerations for graduate programs as they prepare future higher education professionals to support, encourage, and respond to activism on their campuses. Finally, my research offers guidance to upper administrators in their efforts to create inclusive campuses that support rather than dissuade civic engagement through activism.

**Approach to Inquiry**

Scholars generally agree that the research question should dictate the approach to inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Kinmond, 2012; Merriam, 2009). After selecting a topic of interest and designing a research question, the researcher typically decides if they are going to answer their question using a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approach. Simply put, my research question most readily lends itself to qualitative inquiry because I cannot answer it with quantitative data. Understanding how students engage in advocacy and allyship requires in-depth analysis of individual narratives and analysis of the patterns within these narratives. Kinmond (2012) explained how quantitative research focuses on measuring
variables against one another in general terms. In contrast, the use of qualitative methods “enables exploration of dimensions of the social world: features of everyday life, the understandings, experiences, and imaginings of research participants, the ways in which social process, institutions, discourses, and relationships work, and the significance of the meaning they create” (Kinmond, 2012, p. 29). I intentionally used the qualitative grounded theory approach because I wanted to expand upon current research which examines the characteristics and beliefs associated with activism and specifically examine the process of advocacy and allyship development.

To answer my guiding research question, I chose to take a constructivist grounded theory approach. Grounded theory provides great methodological tools that can bring to light the process of a phenomenon and generate theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013, Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Mertens, 2010). I used a grounded theory approach because “grounded theory serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and is a method for developing theory to understand them” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17).

In general, a grounded theory approach to research is more appropriate for research that is concerned with understanding the process of something and producing substantive theory where none exists (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Merriam, 2009). At its core, my research is concerned with understanding the process by which college students participate in advocacy and allyship. There is no known theory on this process. Thus, because my research created a substantive theory where none exists, grounded theory was the most appropriate approach.
Many grounded theorists have adapted and modified Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) original grounded theory approach. I present a more detailed discussion concerning the evolution of grounded theory in the methods section. However, it is important to know that some grounded theorists take a more structured or traditional approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a situational approach (Clarke 2003, 2005) or a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2014). I chose to take a constructivist approach because I reject the notion that the researcher can discover “objective” truth, because I believe that social reality is contextual and constructed, and because I believe that researchers have the responsibility to examine and acknowledge their subjectivity in the research process. Charmaz (2014) writes, “the constructivist approach treats research as a construction but acknowledges that it occurs under specific conditions—of which we may not be aware and which may not be of our choosing” (p. 13). I also chose a constructivist approach to grounded theory because constructivist grounded theory methods are uniquely suited for investigating questions pertaining to marginalized perspectives and social justice (Charmaz, 2014).

In creating social justice ally models, Broido (2000) and Edwards (2006) rely on interviews with individuals who have dominant group identities. Part of my research concerns the ways in which marginalized populations develop as allies for other marginalized populations in which they do not have membership. One approach I could have taken to understand the ally development in marginalized populations is to take the existing ally models and apply them to marginalized populations. To this end, I could have found that these models are appropriate for marginalized populations as well or I may find that these models are not appropriate for marginalized populations.
However, this perspective creates a dominant narrative that ally development based on all privileged identities is the *normal* to which marginalized populations must be compared. Constructivist grounded theory methods provided me a way to develop a theory of advocacy and allyship that is grounded in the experiences of marginalized populations instead of tainted with preconceived notions based on previous ally research that has overlooked the experiences of marginalized populations. When developing my theory, I sought to strike a balance between being professionally informed on relevant literature on advocacy and allyship and not allowing this literature to impede the development of an advocacy and allyship model that is supported by evidence through rigorous data analysis of my participants' experiences.

Traditional grounded theorists reject the idea of a theoretical framework and advocate for conducting little to no review of the literature at the start of one’s study because it could bias the analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Creswell (2013) contended that when using grounded theory, the researcher “needs to set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge” (p. 89). Constructive grounded theorists take a different approach. Constructivists disagree with a traditional grounded theory approach to the literature review for three reasons.

First, they argue that it is impossible to not be familiar with the relevant literature in a scholar's field. Any trained scholar engaged in research is influenced in some fashion by their discipline. Furthermore, a researcher's interest in a particular subject is more than likely driven by both literature and experience, which leads the researcher to form an opinion on any given phenomena. Second, without conducting some form of a literature review, the researcher will be at a loss for what to study. Finally, to not be abreast of the current
literature in one’s field is simply unprofessional (Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg, 2012).

Charmaz (2014) advises, “the trick is to use it [the literature review] without letting it stifle your creativity or strangle your theory” (p. 308). I approached my review of the literature with this spirit in mind.

In my literature review, I sought to balance the professional responsibility and reality of the literature review with the grounded theory idea of entering the field free of preconceived notions. As such, my initial literature review focused on relevant concepts of symbolic interactionism, history of activism on college campuses, identity, critical consciousness, and in-group and ally development. My first review of the literature served as a springboard to further explore advocacy and allyship. However, my initial review of the literature did not prescribe my approach to data gathering; instead, I used it in conjunction with my own creativity and experiences with advocacy and allyship to form initial inquiries. After analyzing my data, I conducted a second review of the literature to determine if themes and processes that I had uncovered aligned with relevant literature and to help integrate my theory.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have situated my research in the broad context of civic engagement on college campuses and have explained my specific focus on student activism as it pertains to advocacy and allyship. I set forth the purpose of my research, which was to develop a substantive theory on advocacy and allyship in college students that enhances an understanding of how students with one or more marginalized identities fight to end oppression for their own marginalized groups and for other marginalized groups in which they do not share membership. I explicitly stated my research question and I have clarified
language, specifically oppression, marginalized, privileged, activist, allies, advocacy and allyship, in order to help the reader understand critical concepts related to my research.

I have argued that research on advocacy and allyship is important because there is an expressed commitment of postsecondary institutions to enhance democratic and civic engagement in its student body. I have argued that encouraging the student body to participate in advocacy and allyship is one way universities can follow through on these espoused values. I have demonstrated that general research on student activism is relevant due to the predictive increase of activism on college campuses. I have also argued that in order to truly understand student activism, it is important to consider the ways in which students commit to both advocacy and allyship.

I have related the theoretical contribution of my research in its ability to enhance the understanding of symbolic interactionism, intersecting identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and in-group and ally development. I have argued the practical relevance of my research in its ability to help higher education professionals support and encourage student activism and create structural changes to foster rather than dissuade activism. I have also argued that my research contains practical relevance for graduate student affairs programs as they develop curriculum to prepare the next generation of future higher education leaders. Finally, I have explained my constructivist grounded theory approach to inquiry. I end my introduction with a quote from the work of an aboriginal activist group that sums up the essence of my interest in advocacy and allyship.

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then lets us work together”

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review in grounded theory is to balance the professional responsibility to be knowledgeable in one’s field with the methodological responsibility to minimize the effects of preconceived notions on data collection and analysis. This delicate balancing act is certainly a source of tension and often leaves grounded theory researchers with questions of when and how to conduct the literature review (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999; Cutcliffe, 2000; Dunne, 2011).

In one respect, grounded theory requires the researcher to produce substantive theory generated through an abductive analysis in which the researcher develops a theory directly based on empirical evidence gathered from collected data. The eventual theory produced by the researcher needs to fit within the context of the research and the theory should not be governed by preexisting structures such as a theoretical framework. The ease in which a reader can identify the obvious link between the researcher’s final theory and the data used to produce that theory is the hallmark of quality grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hudson, 2015; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Alternatively, the researcher must have enough familiarity with a topic to discern relevant patterns from the data and this familiarity requires a review of the literature and experience with the general topic (Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011; Hudson, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Trying to achieve balance between being familiar with the topic under review and allowing substantive theory to emerge absent of preconceived notions has caused a dilemma for grounded theorists regarding the application of the literature review.

In the paragraphs below, I expand on the measures I took to achieve this balance specifically by conducting two reviews of the literature. I then explain the unique use of a
theoretical orientation in grounded theory and my subsequent use of symbolic interactionism as my theoretical orientation. After explaining my theoretical orientation, I review synthesizing concepts related to advocacy and allyship in college students. These synthesizing concepts include: the history of advocacy and allyship on college campuses; the relationship between social justice values and activism; Critical Consciousness Theory and its emphasis on challenging oppressive systems such as capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy; identity development literature and its relevance to privileged, marginalized, and intersecting identities; in-group activism; and ally development.

Grounded Theory and the Literature Review

Grounded theorists use the review of literature in similar and dissimilar ways when compared to other forms of qualitative inquiry. One of the largest dissimilarities between grounded theory inquiry and other qualitative methods is the use or nonuse of theoretical frameworks. In grounded theory, theoretical frameworks more closely resemble a worldview that guides the researcher’s inquiry rather than a semi-rigid structure that frames the research (Becker, 1993; Charmaz, 2014). This difference encourages many grounded theorists to adopt a theoretical orientation rather than a theoretical framework.

Similar to other forms of qualitative research, grounded theory research uses sensitizing concepts to draw attention to important features of a broad phenomenon and to lay the foundations for understanding any given research problem. Dissimilar to other forms of qualitative inquiry, grounded theory research does not use sensitizing concepts to form a hypothesis or to funnel the research toward the goal of verifying existing theory on any given phenomenon. Rather, in grounded theory, researchers use sensitizing concepts to gain general familiarity with the phenomenon, which helps to recognize patterns within the data.
(Bowen, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Patton, 2015). To identify relevant sensitizing concepts, I conducted two literature reviews.

**Rationale for Two Literature Reviews**

Some grounded theorists have argued that the researcher should not engage in an extensive literature review at the beginning of a research project. By foregoing the initial literature review, the researcher is better equipped to have their theory truly emerge from the data unswayed by encoded notions (Glaser 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hickey, 1997). Other grounded theorists argue that in order to meet ethical standards of field-based research and to satisfy the professional responsibility of simply being knowledgeable in one’s field, a researcher must conduct a thorough review of the literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). More contemporary grounded theorists advocate for a balance between these two approaches. Dunne (2011) maintained that grounded theorist should take:

… a position which acknowledges the original ethos of grounded theory and the genuine concerns about the imposition of external frameworks, yet simultaneously recognizes the often practical need for, and potential advantages of, engaging with existing literature in the substantive area at an early stage (p. 117).

Dey (2007), mused that "we [researchers] should not confuse an open mind with an empty head" (p. 176). I agree with both Dunne and Dey. To reconcile the tension of when to conduct the literature review, I conducted my literature review in two phases.

The goal of my first literature review was to obtain enough familiarity with ideas concerning advocacy and allyship to eventually achieve theoretical sensitivity during data analysis. Charmaz (2014) defines theoretical sensitivity as "the ability to understand a define phenomena in abstract terms and to demonstrate abstract relationships between studied
phenomena" (p.161). Urquhart (2007) explained that the initial literature review is an orienting process in which the researcher becomes familiar with the current thinking in the field but does not take a position or form a hypothesis about their future research. My first literature review informed my initial data gathering efforts but I did not create a hypothesis for my findings from this review. Toward the end of my data analysis, I conducted a second review of the literature that focused on key concepts related to my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship. The goal of my second literature review was to situate my research more firmly in current literature while concentrating on the theoretical and practical implications of my findings.

To reconcile the tension of how the literature review should take place, I conducted my first literature review with the understanding that I wanted to be familiar with relevant literature related to advocacy and allyship but I did not want this literature to prescript my findings. Consequently, I loosely applied Blumer's (1969) idea of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical orientation and I used sensitizing concepts to gain familiarity with issues related to advocacy and allyship. Initially, my sensitizing concepts encouraged the literature review process to function more as a broad overview of concepts related to the problem rather than function as in-depth look into a particular idea.

I used my second review of the literature to reexamine the relevancy of both my theoretical orientation and the sensitizing concepts that I identified in my first review of the literature. After conducting this second review, I elaborated on my theoretical orientation, added sensitizing concepts that emerged as more relevant to my findings, and removed concepts that lost relevancy.
Overall, I treated the first literature review process as a springboard toward understanding nuances that shape students’ commitment toward advocacy for their marginalized communities as well as a commitment toward allyship for other marginalized communities. However, I approached the first literature review with caution and with an understanding that my ultimate goal was to generate new theory, grounded in the experiences of advocacy and allyship in my participants. I did not seek to apply or verify existing theory in relation to their experience. I treated the second review of the literature as a way to more firmly relate my findings to current literature and to understand the implications of my study.

**Theoretical Framework versus Theoretical Orientation**

In general, there is ambiguity and controversy over what exactly is a theoretical framework in qualitative research. Anfara and Mertz (2014) set out to develop a comprehensive resource to understand theoretical frameworks and concluded that a unified definition of theoretical framework among all qualitative disciplines does not exist; however, they argue that a theoretical framework is foundational to conducting high quality, qualitative research. Nonetheless, adopting a theoretical framework runs contradictory to the fundamental idea in grounded theory to enter research without any preconceived notions (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Like the role of the literature review, grounded theorists continue to wrestle with the appropriateness of adopting a theoretical framework for their research (Charmaz, 2014). Different from other forms of qualitative research, grounded theorists do not incorporate an *a priori theoretical framework* to form a specific hypothesis or as a way to structure inquiry;
rather, grounded theorists use a *theoretical orientation* to explain their worldview (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 310-314). I use symbolic interactionism as my *theoretical orientation*.

**Theoretical Orientation: Symbolic Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism is a worldview which explains how an individual and society constitute a corollary relationship where the individual is both affected by societal structures and effective in defining societal structures. Most scholars credit Herbert Blumer with developing the initial idea of symbolic interactionism. However, Blumer (1969) himself acknowledges the role John Dewey, W.I. Thomas, Robert Park, William James, Charles Cooley, Florian Znaniecki, James Baldwin, and Robert Redfield had in espousing the concept of symbolic interactionism (p. 1). While these theorists certainly contributed to the formation of symbolic interactionism, George Herbert Mead influenced Blumer the most.

Mead himself did not publish much during his life; however, Mead's contemporaries have organized lecture notes and papers authored by Mead and compiled these writings into several books (e.g., Miller, 1982; Morris, 1934). Mead was a formative scholar who was very influential in the Chicago sociological tradition. Mead set forth the idea that "the individual and society are continually in the process of adjustment" (Miller, 1982, p. 6). Mead argued:

Human society as we know it could not exists without minds and selves, since all its most characteristic features presuppose the possessions of mind and selves by its individual members; but its individual members would not possess minds and selves had they not arisen within or emerged out of the human social process" (Mead, as quoted in Morris, 1934, p. 227).
From this foundation, Blumer (1969) spent his career further exploring and defining symbolic interactionism but was always quick to acknowledge Mead's influence. In the opening of his book, Blumer writes, "I rely chiefly on the thought of George Herbert Mead who, above all others, laid the foundations of the symbolic interactionism approach..."(p. 1).

Blumer argued that three assumptions undergird symbolic interactionism:

First, human beings act toward things because of the meanings that things have for them. Second, the meanings of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. Third, meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by a person in dealing with the things he encounters (p. 2).

Blumer argued that individual's actions toward a person, place, thing, or construct such as schools or political systems are based on the meaning that individuals have for them. Second, the meaning an individual has about a person, place, thing or construct is directly influenced by their societal interactions. Finally, as an individual interacts with the person, place, thing or construct their meaning for that object changes. To understand these tenets, consider a hypothetical relationship between a person and wooden chair.

In this hypothetical situation, a person is gifted a wooden chair. After placing the wooden chair in their living room, the person chooses to sit on it. The chair does not force the person to sit on it, rather, the person chooses to sit on the wooden chair because the person holds the belief that wooden chairs are for sitting. This person defined the chair as an object to sit on because of interactions they have had with other humans. This individual witnessed other people sitting in wooden chairs and was previously invited by others to sit on wooden chairs. When this person sits on their gifted wooden chair, they discover that the
chair is uncomfortable. Consequently, the chair becomes not just a wooden chair but an *uncomfortable wooden chair*. With this modified meaning, the person no longer chooses to sit on the chair; instead, they decide the chair is more useful as firewood and choose to burn it. In this hypothetical example, the person’s original meaning of the chair changed from *an object to sit on* to kindling because of their interactions with the chair.

I use symbolic interactionism as my theoretical orientation because of its insistence that meaning is inherently a social process that is always in a state of flux and because it encourages exploration of how and why people connect their beliefs to their actions. Blumer (1969) writes "it is important to see how this process of designation and interpretation is sustaining, undercutting, redirecting and transforming the ways in which the participants are fitting together their lines of action" (p. 53). Advocacy and allyship is also a continual transforming process where both society influences individual behavior and also where individuals reshape society.

Charmaz (2014) explains the unique way grounded theorists identify a theoretical orientation from the onset of their studies but then keep their theoretical orientations in the background until it becomes relevant in their analyses. Initially, symbolic interactionism influenced my study in so much as it encouraged me to focus on interplay of meaning making between society and the individual. After conducting my analysis, the relevancy of symbolic interactionism further emerged.

**Symbolic Interactionism and My Study**

Although symbolic interactionism serves as my theoretical orientation, it did not provide a rigid or tight structure for my inquiry. Instead, I initially used symbolic interactionism to anchor my analysis toward understanding the *meaning* behind experiences
that encouraged a commitment to and participation in advocacy and allyship. By deeply examining the meaning students place on people, events, and experiences, I was able to create a substantive model on the process of advocacy and allyship.

I used symbolic interactionism as my theoretical orientation because I was motivated to inquire into advocacy and allyship by analyzing the meaning behind my participants’ stories. For example, when a participant shared that they went to a protest because of their friend, I focused my analysis on what the friendship meant to the participant, such as feeling connected. I did not rely only on the descriptive analysis of the mere fact that they had a friend. I further analyzed how the meaning of feeling connected did or did not influence their participation in advocacy and allyship. After analyzing my data, I return to my theoretical orientation of symbolic interactionism and realized it had relevancy to my model of advocacy and allyship in three distinct ways.

First, similar to Blumer’s insistence that humans act upon objects based on their meaning of that object, students act to dismantle oppression based on their meanings related to advocacy and allyship. For example, many participants explained that they amplified voices of marginalized groups in which they did not share membership rather than supplanting these voices. This is because participant’s meaning of allyship is synonymous to active support of a group but not leading the charge to dismantle oppression for that group. In Chapter Four, I explain the relationship between meaning and action in greater detail when I discuss the category of Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship.

Second, my analysis revealed that social interactions influence students’ meaning of advocacy and allyship. It is important to note that social interaction does not mean only human interactions. Social interactions can also include books, television shows, movies, and
a plethora of other media in which the individual engages with society. I explain the ways society influences students’ meaning of advocacy and allyship in Chapter Four when I discuss how sociopolitical climate relates to advocacy and allyship and further discuss the implications of these influences in Chapter Five.

Finally, student activists interpret and alter their meaning of advocacy and allyship based on their interactions with advocacy and allyship. By acknowledging that advocacy and allyship is both a changing and evolving process, my overall substantive theory of advocacy and allyship accounts for the fact that student activists alter their meaning of advocacy and allyship. I provide my detailed explanation of the continual and evolving nature of advocacy and allyship in Chapter Four as well. For the remainder of this chapter, I focus on sensitizing concepts related to understanding how students commit and engage in advocacy and allyship.

**History of Advocacy and Allyship**

Although college student activism is popularly associated with the 1960s, college students have organized to bring about social change since the inception of American higher education (Broadhurst, 2014; Curtin & McGarty, 2016; Ellsworth & Burns, 2009; Rhoads, 1998; Rhoads 2016). What follows is a review of college student activism from the colonial period through present.

**The Colonial Period through the 1800s**

During the colonial period, college students organized to bring about social change within the academy by revolting against specific curriculum and administrations. Ellsworth and Burns (2009) explained that student activism has existed since the beginning of American higher education. In 1638, students at Harvard protested moldy bread and Nathaniel’s Eaton’s, the first president of Harvard, treatment of his assistant who he beat
with a walnut cudgel. Eaton was eventually dismissed. Additionally, Broadhurst (2014) described how college students were “swept up in the revolutionary spirit that pervaded American society” (p.4) prior to and after the American Revolution. Students boycotted British goods and participated in visual demonstrations against the British.

By the 1800’s, violent rebellions were occurring throughout college campuses. Ellsworth and Burns (2009) explained that “at Princeton in 1807, half the student body was suspended for participation in a violent rebellion” (p. 9). Ellsworth and Burns elaborated on how “violence was an integral part of many demonstrations of discontent during the early years of the nineteenth century” (p. 10). While not all students evoked violence to protest, college students in the early years of American higher education did not shy away from trying to create change within and outside of the academy.

**Activism in 1900s through 1950s**

Broadhurst (2014) elaborates on how in the early 20th century, student activists addressed injustices outside their universities by fighting against the plight of the working class, participating in peaceful protest against the World Wars, and fighting against fascism. In 1915, membership in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS), whose mission was to protest capitalism and other social systems based on laissez-faire economic policies, rivaled that of many popular 1960s student-activists organizations. In addition to ISS, other Marxist-influenced student organizations, such as the Student League for Industrial Democracy and the National Student League, emerged in the early 1900s.

During the 1930s through 1950s, activism on college campuses calmed as patriotism elevated due to the United States' involvement in the World Wars. However, some college activists took part in anti-war demonstrations. In 1933, students from Oxford promised not
to fight in the war. This so-called ‘Oxford Oath’ spread across the country, with many students pledging not to fight. In addition, the Women’s Peace Party, a women-led pacifist organization that also protested American involvement in the World Wars, had a large presence on college campuses (Schott, 1985). Finally, the 1957 Civil Rights Act and the subsequent 1958 Youth March for Civil Rights on Washington D.C. set the stage for the 1960’s fight against white supremacy and for racial justice (Sandage, 1993).

The 1960s

In 1960, four African-American students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, known now as the Greensboro Four, sat at the segregated Woolworth’s lunch counter and demanded service. Their actions encouraged sit-in movements across the country and consequently put pressure on Southern states to desegregate. In addition to the Greensboro Four and the sit-in movements across the country, other civil rights organizations were gaining momentum. The most well-known student civil rights organization is the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which had membership across the country. Additionally, two students from Merritt College formed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, later renamed simply the Black Panther Party. Other 1960s student activist groups calling for civil rights included: Students for a Democratic Society; Student Peace Union; Southern Student Organizing Committee; Young Americans for Freedom, and Youth International Party (Broadhurst, 2014; Sandage, 1993).

Broadhurst (2014) further illustrates how in addition to the fight for Black civil rights, the 1960’s saw an emergence of the Chicano Movement, the American Indian Movement, the Gay Liberation Movement, second-wave feminism and Anti-Vietnam War Movement. On May 4, 1970, nine students were injured and four killed after National Guardsmen opened
fire on protesters at Kent State. The demonstrators were protesting America’s invasion of Cambodia. The Kent State killings evoked the biggest protest in American higher education history with more than one million students on one hundred thousand campuses protesting the violence used by the National Guard.

The 1970s Through Today

Broadhurst (2014) and Rhoads (1998) explained that contrary to the popular narrative portraying college students as greedy and disinterested, college students in the 1970s and 1980s continued to fight for social change. Volunteerism increased during the 1970s and by the 1980s, students held divestment movements across the country to dissuade monies going to any country in gross violation of human rights. Additionally, students continued to fight against the United States military involvement by organizing demonstrations against the invasion of Grenada and the Gulf War. During the 1990s, student activists continued to call for more inclusive college campuses for people of color, the disability community, and the LGBQT community. In the early 2000s, students protested the use of sweatshops in university apparel, the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and continued to raise concerns about unwelcoming campus climates. In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement represented the largest network of college student activism since the Vietnam war (Brazelton, Magolda, & Renn, 2012).

In Chapter One, I highlighted the current rapid expansion of college student activism over the past five years as students continue to challenge the status quo to dismantle oppression. Specific national movements on college campuses at the time of writing include: the Black Lives Matter movement, support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, the #MeToo movement, protests against the North Dakota Access
Pipeline, and reactionary protests to the Trump Administration’s various policies. Although Trump’s election and consequential term has certainly sparked protest across the country, it is important to remember that the resurgence of modern-day student activism began before the November 2016 presidential race (Brazelton et al., 2012). Brazelton et al. predicted that because of social media, activism on college campuses will continue to increase and there is robust evidence that their prediction is coming true (Dupree, 2017; Eagan et al., 2015; Wong, 2015).

As this brief historical review of college student activism details, activism has been a part of American higher education since its inception and continues today. With the longevity and staying power of activism on college campuses comes the reality that administrators must respond to college student activism. The general perception of student activism evolved from viewing student activism as a problem that needs to be controlled to viewing student activism as a positive indicator of civic engagement (Barnhardt, 2012; Biddix et al., 2009; Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Martin, 2014). However, we know relatively little about how students translate their social justice values into activism.

**Social Justice Activists Values and Profile**

Despite the assertion that one of the main goals of higher education is to help students match their values to action, empirical studies connecting values to behaviors specifically as it relates to promoting social justice are relatively rare (Mayhew et al., 2016). Scholars initially researched college student activism through exploring quantitative factors that may correlate to student activism (Curtin & McGarty, 2016). According to Block, Haan and Smith (1969), the profile of the 1960s student activist was remarkably similar regardless of the cause. They write:
Activists are found to be intellectually gifted, academically superior, and politically radical young people from advantaged homes in which the parents are successful in their careers, comfortable in their economic position and liberal in their political orientation. (Block et al. p.144).

Sutherland (1981) developed a typology for the 1960's college student based on ideology and political activism. In this typology, *acting radicals* categorize liberals who partook in actions to change the status quo. *Passive radicals* categorize liberals who wanted to change the status quo but did not take action to do so. *Passive conservatives* categorize conservatives who wanted to maintain the status quo but did not take actions to do so. Finally, *acting conservatives* categorizes conservatives who wanted to maintain the status quo and took actions to do so. Sutherland associated having a professional, working and educated mother; being first-born; having high education aspirations; being secular; and being somewhat aimless in career aspirations to the category *acting radicals* (pp. 210-214).

Rhoads (1997) argued a fundamental shift in student activism characteristics took place in the 1990s because there was an increased focus on multiculturalism and identity politics. Starting in the 1990s, students with more marginalized identities increasingly participated in student activism. Nonetheless, modern day college student activist still shared some overlapping characteristics with the 1960s activist such as a liberal political orientation. Goldstein and Davis (2010) concluded that the profile of heterosexual allies includes a fairly homogeneous group made up of mostly white, female, politically liberal, religiously inactive, social science and humanities majors (p. 489). Hope et al. (2016) explained that modern student activist participating in the Black Lives Matter movement and/or advocacy for DACA tend to have less elite statuses compared to their 1960s predecessors. Although the
correlative characteristics of a student activist have changed, the idea that student activists act to create change remains constant.

**Translating Social Justice Values into Action**

In addition to understanding demographic factors that contribute to connecting social justice values into action, some scholars try to measure the impact of specific college practices on translating values into action. For example, Bowman (2011) found a positive correlation between participating in intentional diversity exercises and a growth in civic engagement. Sax (2008) and Sax, Bryant, and Harper (2005) found that an expression of support by faculty correlated to an increase in social activism. O’Neil (2012), found that high impact practices coupled with reflective learning encouraged increased involvement in political activism.

Denson and Bowman (2013) concluded that when students who hold predominantly privileged identities positively interact with peers who hold predominantly marginalized identities correlated to an increase in activism. Conversely, Hernandez (2012) explains how Latina women’s negative interactions with peers who hold predominantly privileged identities increased their social activism. Finally, Einfeld and Collins (2008) concluded that service learning projects increased awareness of social justice issues and increased the desire to remain civically engaged. In addition to studying demographic correlations to student activism and institutional practices that influence activism, scholars have studied how individual attributes and values do or do not correlate to activism.

Miller, Sendrowitz, Connacher, Blanco, Muñiz de la Peña, Morere, and Bernardi (2007) developed a Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ) to measure social justice self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interest, choice goals, social supports, and barriers related to social
justice engagement. In 2009, Miller, Sendrowitz, Connacher, Blanco, Muñiz de la Peña, Bernardi, and Morere (2009) used the SIQ to measure the relationship between these constructs in 274 college students enrolled in a large northeastern university. In this study, Miller et al. found that both self-efficacy and outcome expectation had a direct effect on social justice interest with the former having more of an effect. In other words, a greater level of self-efficacy correlated with higher interest in social justice (p. 501). Furthermore, social justice support structures positively influenced a social justice commitment by enhancing social justice self-efficacy beliefs (Miller et al., 2009, p. 502).

Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson (2012) developed a 24-question Social Justice Attitude Scale (SJAS) to "measure constructs that might be predicative of social justice related behaviors" (Torres-Harding, et al, p. 85). The SJAS is intended to measure beliefs about social justice, perceived behavioral control around social justice, subjective norms around social justice, and intentions to engage in social justice. In mixed methods designed Henderson and Wright (2015) used the SJAS to measure the impact of an undergraduate community psychology course on a commitment to social justice. Henderson and Wright found no significant change in SJAS scores of participants before they took the course and afterwards. Although, the researchers argue that qualitative analysis revealed a positive increase in items related to the SJAS.

Torres-Harding, Diaz, Schamberger, & Carollo (2015) used the SJAS to measure the relationship between Psychological Sense of Community (PSOC), the mission of the university, social justice attitudes, and social justice activism. Results of their study "indicated that students with higher PSOC were more likely to agree with the university’s social justice-related mission statement, and agreement with the mission was strongly
associated with favorable social justice attitudes and activism" (Torres-Harding et al., 2015, p. 81). Furthermore, the authors found a positive correlation between taking service-learning courses and a greater likelihood of engaging in activism. Common among all of the above-mentioned studies is the desire to measure the correlation of belief patterns and/or experience to action. However, none of these studies explicitly address questions of how or why patterns emerge.

**Critical Consciousness Theory**

Critical Consciousness Theory provides a promising lead toward better understanding the ways in which marginalized individuals in general develop a commitment to advocacy (Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts et al., 2011). Critical Consciousness Theory stems from Freire’s (1970) influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and examines how marginalized groups rise up to challenge systems of oppression. Freire used the word *conscientização*, which means, "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 35). Freire argued *conscientização*, required both reflection and action. Freire's analysis of transformations comes in the form of dialogue, which he calls *the word*. Freire eloquently describes the relationship between reflection, action, and *the word*:

> When a word is deprived of its dimensions of action, reflection automatically suffers as well: and the word is changed into idle chatter, inner *verbalism*, into an alienated and alienating 'blah.'.... There is no transformation without action. On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism*. The later—action for action sake's—negates the true praxis
and makes dialogue impossible.... Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true word, with which men and women transform the world (Freire, 1970, pp. 87-88).

Scholars have translated the word conscientização into "consciousness raising" (Smith, 1976) and it is through a consciousness-raising process that individuals, both privileged and marginalized, are able to challenge systems of oppression. The psychological idea of Critical Consciousness Theory is concerned with this understanding of consciousness raising (Watts et al., 2011). Closely related to the psychological interpretation consciousness raising is empowerment theory (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Empowerment theory explores both the role of the individual self and the role of social influence and collective action in challenging oppression. Although Freire (1970) argued clearly that both the oppressor and oppressed can experience conscientização, United States scholars tend to focus on marginalized populations and their experience with critical consciousness.

Watts, et al. explain how "critical consciousness describes how oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyze their social condition and act to change them" (p. 44). Watts et al. explain that an individual sense of agency, a belief that efforts will produce desired outcome, bridges the period between reflection and action that Freire described. Consequently, Watts et al. describes three components of critical consciousness.

First, critical reflection is the social analysis and subsequent rejection of society inequalities. Second, political efficacy, commonly referred to as agency, is the perceived capacity to make social change. Finally, critical action is the action taken to change aspects of society to dismantle inequalities. With the process of critical consciousness clearly
defined, psychologists began to develop tools to measure critical consciousness at the individual level.

Diemer et al. (2014) developed a 22-itemed Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS) to measure critical reflection and critical action. Thomas, Barrie, Brunner, Clawson, Hewitt, Jeremie-Brink, and Rowe-Johnson (2014) developed a nine-item instrument to measure the level (low, medium, or high) of critical consciousness in youth of color. Baker and Brookins (2014) developed a 35-item measurement called the Sociopolitical Consciousness Scale (SCS) to measure young people's understanding of their social world and their ability to influence it regardless of marginalized or privileged identities. McWhirter and McWhirter (2016) developed a scale to measure agency in Latina and Latino youth. Finally Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch and Goodrich (2016) developed a 19-item Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure (CCCM) to evaluate the level of critical consciousness as it relates to three distinct forms of oppression: classism, racism and heterosexism.

These measurements are relatively young and few studies have used these scales to assess the development of a critical consciousness in youth and young adults. Diemer and Rapa (2016) applied their CCS to analyze data on 2,811 ninth graders that participated in the Civic Education Study. They found that while higher perceptions of social inequality correlated as expected with higher involvement in political action (i.e., high perception of social inequality predicted a higher level of social and political action), political efficacy did not mediate or moderate the relationship between reflection and action as expected. The belief that actions could make a difference in dismantling inequality did not correlate to higher levels of political action. This specific finding throws into question the theoretical
foundations of political efficacy as a key determinant in political action among marginalized populations. Diemer & Rapa (2016) wrote:

> These analyses failed to support a central tenet of CC [Critical Consciousness] theory—that agency, in this case internal political efficacy—links critical reflection to critical action. As this is a central idea within this substantive framework, the failure to support them in this study is puzzling and raises a number of open questions (p. 237).

Diemer and Rapa suggest more empirical studies are needed to explore this unexpected finding. It is also true that the understanding of political efficacy may be incomplete and the measurement tool flawed.

Despite the infancy of these measurement and their limitations, they hold a potentially exciting opportunity to measure the impact of efforts to increase critical consciousness or evaluate the overall critical consciousness of the student body. With empirical studies using these measurements, scholars and practitioners alike can gain greater insights into an individual student’s critical reflection, perceived political efficacy, and level of critical action.

In general, Critical Consciousness Theory examines how individuals reflect on oppression, recognize their ability to challenge oppressive systems, and then take actions to do so. Because I was interested in understanding how students with one or more marginalized identities take action to challenge oppressive systems toward their own groups as well as other groups in which they do not share membership, there are parallels between Critical Consciousness Theory and my inquiry to advocacy and allyship. However, current literature on critical consciousness does not fully examine how or why a person may become
critically conscious. It is reasonable to assume that identity development may influence critical consciousness.

Identity Development

Identity is complex, which makes understanding one part of identity, let alone the multiple components of identity, extremely difficult. Yet, it is useful to understand identity and how identity comes into existence if we as humans value social justice. Freire (1970) argued that the fragmentation of humans into groups creates systems of oppression. Many scholars have echoed Freire's observation regarding fragmentation and oppression and explained the incredibly complex relationship between individual and social identities as it relates to the existence of privilege and oppression (Johnson, 2006; Jones & Abes, 2013; Tatum 1997). Essentially, an understanding of identity is inherent in a study of advocacy and allyship for two reasons. First, identity dictates membership in privileged and marginalized groups (Jones, 2009). Second, as I clarified in Chapter One, membership distinguishes advocacy from allyship. After recognizing their membership in either a privileged or marginalized group, individuals have a choice to participate in advocacy to end oppression for a community in which they have membership and the choice to participate in allyship to end oppression for a community in which they do not.

Tatum (2013) explained how identity influences positionality. Once people are made aware of their positionality, they have choice to use their positionality and their unearned privilege work toward changing systems of hierarchy and dominance. A great deal of scholarly research on identity exists and an in-depth review of this literature is outside the scope of this paper. Therefore, I take a macro approach to understanding identity development and synthesize similar and dissimilar themes among identity development
First, I present the similarities among singular identity models related to marginalized identities. I then discuss the similarities among singular privileged identity models. Finally, I spend quite a bit more time explaining multiple, intersectional identity development because by focusing on advocacy and allyship, I am inherently approaching my research with an acknowledgment of intersectionality.

**Marginalized Identity Development**

A common theme in many of marginalized identity development models is a period in which a marginalized individual recognizes that they are different from the dominant group and are subsequently oppressed. For example, Cross's (1978, 1991) Black Racial Identity Development model includes the *Encounter* stage, which is when a Black person realizes that he or she cannot be white and is confronted by the reality of racism. Cass (1979) and Fassinger (1998) both begin their models on Gay and Lesbian Identity Development with an initial *Awareness* period in which an individual acknowledges an attraction to same-sex individuals and realizes that this attraction is *different*. Finally, Gibson's (2006) Disability Identity Development Model includes a period of *realization* in which an individual with a disability realizes that they are treated differently due to disability status.

The resolution of living with a marginalized status within the dominant norm of society is another common theme among many marginalized identity development models. A person with a marginalized status learns how to operate in societal norms that are often created by individuals with the privileged identity. For example, during the *Internalization* stage of Cross's (1991) Black Racial Identity Development model, an individual maintains their Black identity while also interacting with non-Black culture. Similarly, Cass’s (1979) *Identity Synthesis* designates a time when a person becomes less focused on the difference
between non-heterosexuals and heterosexuals. Finally, Kim’s (2012) Asian American Racial Identity Development theory includes and *Incorporation* stage, which is marked by the individual’s ability to have a positive relationship with their Asian identity while also relating to many different ethnicities.

**Privileged Identity Models**

Although most identity models examine the development of a marginalized identity, there are a growing number of theories that pertain to the development of privileged identities. These models include White Racial Identity Models (Helms 1990, 1995; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson 1994), and Heterosexual Identity Models (Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002). All of these theorists approached their inquiry into understanding a privileged identity by acknowledging that individuals with a privileged identity do not initially explore this aspect of their identity and are consequently unaware of their privilege. For example, in Helm’s (1990, 1995) Model of White Racial Identity Development, a White person does not begin their understanding of whiteness until they have an initial *Contact* with an experience that highlights how their whiteness has benefited them. Similarly, Worthington et al. argued that heterosexuals initially exist in this world having unexplored their commitment to heterosexuality.

These models differ in two significant ways. First, some of the models expressed that the desired outcome for privileged individuals is for them to commit to dismantling oppressive systems that systematically advantaged them. For example, Helm’s (1990, 1995) final stage, *Autonomy*, represents the willingness and ability to actively challenge racism. In contrast, other models account for the fact that some privileged individuals will fight oppressive systems while others will not. For example, Rowe et al. (1994) argued that some
privileged whites will believe that their whiteness gives them racial superiority while other privileged whites will commit to understanding racism and work toward social change. Similarly, Worthington et al. (2002) acknowledged that in the final stage of heterosexual identity development, *Synthesis*, a heterosexual has a high likelihood to be more affirming toward a non-heterosexual identity, but this is not always the case.

Singular identity theories are a useful starting place to understand identity; however, a major criticism of singular identity theories is their inability to account for other aspects of identity that play an equally important and interconnected role in individuals’ concepts of their core selves. Multiple identity and intersectionality theories reconcile this major limitation of singular identity development models.

**Multiple Identity and Intersectionality**

Articulating the chief limitation of single identity models, Reynolds and Pope (1991) explained that these models “rarely acknowledge the complexities of multiple identities and multiple oppressions” (p. 174). Even though Reynolds and Pope made this observation in 1991, to date, relatively few studies incorporate this understanding of complexity in identity or consider intersectionality in their research design. None the less there is a growing interest in both multiple identity development and intersectional identity development.

**Multiple identity development.** Reynolds and Pope (1991), Jones and McEwen (2000), and Abes et al. (2007) all created development identity models that attempt to lean into the complexity of identity. Although not centered on identity development, Baxter-Magolda’s (1999) work on self-authorship is also extremely influential in furthering the conversations toward understanding multiple identities. These studies build on each other, with Abes et al. (2007) being the most current framework of multiple identities.
Reynolds and Pope (1991) are the pioneers in multiple identity development models. Reynolds and Pope recognized that identities are socially constructed and believe that humans are made up of multiple identities:

Nature does not create discrete categories of human traits or identities. People create these categories to simplify the complexity of multiple identities and multiple realities. There are many women who are also people of color; many people of color who are also lesbian, gay, or bisexual; many lesbian, gay, or bisexual people who may also have physical disabilities; and so on. (p. 175).

Their groundbreaking study explained the now widely accepted beliefs about how students begin to understand the multiple aspects that make up the self.

Jones and McEwen (2000) and Abes et al. (2007) further moved simplistic frameworks of identity into a more comprehensive understanding of multiple identities. The main difference between these two models is the addition of Baxter-Magolda's (1999) concept of meaning making in the latter model. Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) used data from Jones' (1997) dissertation work. Jones’s stated purpose in her dissertation work was "to understand the multiple dimensions of identity development among women college students" (Abes & Jones, 2013, p. 64). Abes et al. (2007) recognized that the MMDI did not take into account cognitive and interpersonal development. Consequently, they looked to update the original model by collecting narrative data from ten lesbian college students. The result of this effort was the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI).

Jones and McEwen's (2000) original MMDI depicts a nucleus core sense of self that is made up of personal attributes, characteristics, and identities. The core is surrounded by
socially constructed identities (sexual orientation, race, culture, class, religion and gender) that are placed on an orbital trajectory based on contextual factors such as family background, sociocultural conditions, current experiences, and life planning. The salience, or relevancy of each social identity, is depicted by how close the identity appears to the core. The more salient the identity is, the closer it is to the core. An individual person authors the salience of an identity, meaning they identify for themselves how salient their social identities are. However, the salience of an identity is also influenced by society. Often, the more an individual experiences marginalization because of an identity, the more salient that identity becomes.

Abes et al. (2007) expanded on the original multiple identity development works of Jones and McEwen (2000) by incorporating Baxter-Magolda's (1999) meaning making and self-authorship process. Their RMMDI added a meaning-maker filter to the model and moved the context component of the original model to illustrate how contextual influences are interpreted through a meaning-making filter, which then affects the salience of particular identity. The power of contextual influences on an individual’s understanding of their identity and the salience of specific parts of their identity depends on how far the individual is on the path toward self-authorship. If the person is further along in the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects of the self-authoring process, then the contextual influence will not have much pull in their own understanding of identity.

By adding the concept of a meaning-making filter, the 2007 model better illustrates how identity is fluid and contextual. Individuals recognize, place importance on, and value certain or many aspects of their identity depending on how they filter contextual influences. Initially, individuals make meaning out of their identities based on outside-of-self influences
such as peers, family, norms, and stereotypes, among others; however, as individuals mature and grow toward self-authorship, the meaning of their identities is less influenced by outside forces and is more influenced by a reflective understanding of self. Although the RMMDI helps further an understanding of holistic identity development, Jones and Abes (2013) recognized its shortcomings in acknowledging intersectionality.

**Intersectionality.** Using the existing data from their longitudinal study on lesbian college students, Jones and Abes (2013) conjectured how the RMMDI model may look different with intersectional, critical race, or queer theoretical underpinnings. These “critical models are intended to be theoretical interpretation of identity, not necessarily showing how people understand their own identity” (Jones & Abes, 2013 p. 134). Jones and Abes created the Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (I-MMDI) as a way to illustrate how individual identities are situated within larger systems of privilege and oppression.

Crenshaw (1989) coined the term *intersectionality* and first used the word to examine how race and gender interact in Black women's' employment experiences. Crenshaw (1991) argued that "because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinate" (p. 140). Since Crenshaw's work, scholars and activist have used the term *intersectional* to denote a framework used to understand multiple-dimensional and interlocking identities and their relationship to privilege and oppression (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Jones & Abes, 2013; Zambrana & Dill, 2006). Despite the rise in familiarity among scholars with the term *intersectionality*, few studies have used it as their framework. One reason for this is that
intersectionality research is simply very difficult to conduct (Jones & Abes, 2013, pp. 155-156).

Bowleg (2008) explained that traditional data analysis in both quantitative and qualitative inquiry encourages the researcher to organize their research based on an additive approach to multiple identities rather than a truly intersectional approach. Traditional forms of data analysis encourage researchers to treat multiple identities with an and mentality. For example, a Black, female, lesbian is often analyzed from her experience as black and as female and as a lesbian, rather than analyzed as a holistic person that carries all of these identities with her, all of the time. Bowleg (2008) argued that from the beginning, well-intended intersectionality researchers ask additive questions rather than intersectional questions.

Furthermore, traditional thought about conducting quality research often requires a reductionist approach toward understanding. Researchers narrow their focus in order to produce high quality research that meet rigorous standards of a particular methodology. The prevailing message is that the more variables of interest the researcher tries to incorporate, the more time it takes to complete. At some point, it becomes impractical to conduct the research at all. Conversely, researchers may sacrifice quality in their efforts to understand more. Despite these challenges, skilled researchers are beginning to take innovative approaches to produce quality research that acknowledges interwoven, non-additive identities (Bowleg, 2013; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Hancock, 2007, 2011; Jones & Abes, 2013).

**In-Group Activism Models**

My study on advocacy and allyship primarily focused on action. I was interested in the process students go through when acting to end oppression for their own marginalized
groups as well as other marginalized groups. In the introduction of this paper, I provided examples of activism taking place on college campuses in recent years. Although there is a relatively large amount of literature pertaining to the historical presence of student activism, there is a dearth of literature on understanding the process by which a college student becomes an in-group activist.

With the exception of Cross's (1978, 1991) final stage in his Black Racial Identity Development Model, final stages or themes of marginalized group identity development theories emphasized acceptance and understanding of a particular aspect of identity rather than a commitment to challenge oppressive systems related to that identity. Cross's final stage of his Black Racial Identity Development Model, *Internalization-Commitment*, is characterized by a person's involvement as a social activist who is committed to resolving problems of racial inequalities. Although single identity development models provide in-depth analysis of how a person acknowledges and understands an aspect of their identity, these models do not explain how a student with a marginalized identity commits to and engages in advocacy.

Renn (2007) is one of a few scholars who attempted to understand how students become activists for their own communities. Researching LGBTQ leadership, Renn developed a schema that explains how an LGBTQ student may enter into both leadership and activism. Renn argued that in her participants emerged the following pattern:

… [a] pattern consisted of a prompt to involvement, joining or forming an LGBT[Q] student group, and becoming a group leader, with a simultaneous cycle of increased involvement (as a member and then leader and/or activist) promoting more widespread knowledge of a student’s LGBT/Queer identity and vice-versa. (p. 317).
From this unformed pattern, Renn developed a model of the involvement and identity systems of LGBTQ student leaders.

After acknowledging this consistent pattern, Renn (2007) developed four typologies of LGBT/Queer student leaders: LGBT Student Leaders, LGBT Activist, Queer Leaders and Queer Activist (p. 320). The difference between LGBT and queer students represents the different views of sexuality. LGBT students identified in opposition of heterosexual relationship held a binary heterosexual/non-heterosexual understanding of sexuality. In contrast, queer students rejected the traditional constructs of sexuality all together and had a more fluid understanding of sexuality. The difference between a leader and an activist centered on the students’ desire to work within the dominant, normative system and students who wanted to dismantle the dominant, normative system. LGBT/Queer students who wanted to work within the system were labeled leaders and LGBT/Queer students who want to dismantle the system all together were labeled activist. Renn viewed leaders as positional because they lead from established roles and organizational norms and viewed activists as transitional because they wanted to transform the structures of power and privilege. Renn argued that LGBT/Queer students who commit to fighting heterosexist oppressive structures tend to move toward a Queer Activist orientation throughout their leadership involvement in college.

In my review of higher education literature, I was only able to locate one other study pertaining to the development of student activist identity. In his dissertation, Cumming (2014) proposed a five-stage cyclical moral development and moral action process. Cumming’s main argument is that students' moral thinking influences action, and in return their actions in activism influences their moral thinking.
In September 2016, the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* released a special issue pertaining to current student activism. Articles in this special edition focused on benefits that marginalized groups gain in organizing together to create change (DeAngelo, Schuster, & Stebleton, 2016; Kimball, Moore, Vaccaro, Troiano, & Newman; Warnock & Hurst 2016), institutional responses and campus climate for activists (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016), and the experiences, tools, and strategies of student activists (Hope et al., 2016; Linder, Myers, Riggle, & Lacy, 2016). Although these articles are useful in understanding the current activist climate on college campuses, none of these articles directly dealt with understanding the developmental process of advocacy. My proposed inquiry into advocacy and allyship aims to help fill in this gap in the literature.

**Ally Development**

Understanding how students become allies for marginalized groups in which they do not have membership is equally important to my research. Reason and Broido (2005) eloquently articulated one of the challenges that allies face:

> Allies must find a precarious balance between knowing when to take a seat at the table of social justice advocacy, joining those who are oppressed at combating oppression; when to speak up; when to be silent in order to listen to the experiences of others; and when to leave the table altogether, so as not to infringe on or usurp the role of target group members in advocating for their own liberation (p. 88).

Ally models attempt to explain the intricacies of *understanding one's place at the table* and the commitment to show up at the table in the first place. Some ally models focus on being an ally for one specific group while other models take a broader approach to ally development.
Specific ally models include racial ally models (Reason et al., 2005), LGBTQ ally models (Washington & Evans, 1991), and disability ally models (Evans, Assadi, & Herriott, 2005; Myers, Lindburg, & Nied, 2014). While not explicitly producing ally development models, a growing body of research also concentrates on how men can be allies in preventing sexual assault on campus (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2010; Flood, 2011). Holistic ally development models include those presented by Broido (2000) and Edwards (2006). All ally models in some way account the process of recognizing oppression, developing a belief that oppression is wrong, and translating this belief into some sort of action against oppressive structures.

Washington and Evans (1991) explained that action is the last and most important stage in becoming an ally to the non-heterosexual community. Evans et al. (2005) adapt the Washington and Evans model to disability ally development and advocate that true disability allies take direct action to challenge oppressive norms and structures people with disabilities face (pp.76-77). Broido (2000) defined social justice allies as "members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership" (p. 3). In this definition, the term working implies that action is required in order to be an ally. Because the definition of ally assumes action, the question becomes how students with privileged identities commit to taking action. I chose to focus on holistic ally development models and literature because they most closely align with my interest in allyship in marginalized populations.

Few empirical studies exist that examine the effect of the college environment on the development of a social justice ally. Broido's (2000) Social Justice Ally model represents
one of the only empirical studies that examined how college students become social justice allies. Broido began her scholarly work on social justice allyship through examining six participants engaged in ally behaviors. Among all six participants, Broido recognized four themes. First, all six students entered college with a preexisting open and accepting attitude toward people different from themselves. Second, once in college, social justice allies became better informed on social justice issues. Third, during college, students involved in social justice engaged in a meaning making processes for social justice issues. Fourth, social justice allies developed a sense of self-confidence toward themselves, their views, and their knowledge. Although only one participant recognized the importance of developing skills to address inequalities, Broido argued that helping social justice allies develop skills is an important role of higher education professional (Broido & Reason, 2005).

Reflecting on the experience of her participants, Broido concluded that "knowledge, attitudes, and skills all were necessary precursors to ally behaviors, but at least for these participants, these were not sufficient for actual action as an ally" (Broido & Reason, 2005). Broido recognized that with the exception of one participant, her participants did not initially seek out involvement in allyship. For her participants, their involvement in allyship stemmed from recruitment into specific jobs or roles within the university or because of invitations from peers to sign petitions, attend rallies, join groups, and participate in other actions (Broido & Reason, 2005, p. 23).

interest, altruism, or a sustained and grounded commitment to social justice. While all three aspirations may bring a student to act, those who become advocates for specifically for social justice reasons are more likely to act to end all forms of oppression, not just ones that directly affect them or people who are close to them. An individual who aspires to be a social justice ally does so based on the "illumination of privilege as liberating and consciously uses an understanding privilege against itself these individuals hope to escape, impeded, amend, redefine, and destroy the system" that perpetuates oppression (Edwards, 2006, p. 47).

One significant shortfall of ally models is that they are written with an assumption that allies are coming from a place of privilege and thus do not address the complex realities that students with both marginalized and privileged identities face. A second shortcoming is the lack of empirical evidence to support their claims. To date, no empirical study has been done related to Broido's (2000) original ideas of ally development or Edwards’ (2006) conceptual model of ally development.

**Reminder of Purpose and Research Question**

While in-group activist models, ally development models, and empirical studies on developing a commitment to social justice allude to factors that may predict a student's engagement in advocacy and allyship, they do not specifically examine or address how students with both marginalized and privileged identities participate in advocacy. Furthermore, none of these models address how students commit to both advocacy and allyship together. My grounded theory approach to inquiry helps illuminate this process and identifies critical factors that influence advocacy and allyship in undergraduate college students.
The purpose of this study was to develop a preliminary model toward advocacy and allyship in college students that will enhance the understanding of how students develop a commitment to and engage in fighting oppression of their own marginalized groups and marginalized groups in which they do not have membership. This model has both theoretical and practical implications for all higher education professionals concerned with fostering a critically engaged and a socially just student body. The following research question guided my effort:

How do undergraduate college students with one or more marginalized identities commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship?

Chapter Summary

I began this chapter with an explanation of the unique role of both theoretical framework and literature review in grounded theory inquiry. Although some grounded theorists argue against the use of a theoretical framework, I demonstrated the utility symbolic interactionism has as a theoretical orientation that anchors my analysis to focus on the meaning behind commitment and engagement in advocacy and allyship. I then explained the sensitizing concepts that relate to advocacy and allyship.

First, I explored the history of student activism in the United States higher education system. Next, I described demographic and individual characters which have been linked to activism. I then detailed Critical Consciousness Theory and its explanation of translating awareness to action. Then, I explained the evolution of identity development literature. Finally, I examined current in-group activist and ally development models. Through a constructivist grounded theory approach to understanding advocacy and allyship, I hope to
begin to fill in the gaps of our understanding by illuminating how students may commit to
dismantling all forms of oppression.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

As I mentioned in the introduction, institutions of higher education often espouse a commitment to both diversity and inclusion (ACPA & NASPA, 2010, 2015) and promote democratic ideals by encouraging civic engagement (Hamrick, 1998; Jacoby, 2017; Kezar, 2010; Rhoads, 1998; Sponsler & Hartley, 2013). I have argued that one avenue to merge these expressed goals is to embolden students to participate in advocacy and allyship. Although current literature addresses college students’ ally development (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Evans et al., 2005; Goldstein & Davis, 2010; Myers et al., 2014; Washington & Evans, 1991) and in-group activism (DeAngelo et al., 2016; Hope et al., 2016; Renn, 2007), to date, no literature addresses the development of an individual as both an ally and an in-group activist, thus overlooking the intersectional nature of anti-oppression activism.

More importantly, the literature on in-group activists and allies insufficiently addresses questions of how and why students become in-group activists or allies. Often research on ally and activism takes a thematic or factor-based approach, which develops a descriptive explanation of what activism and activists looks like rather than explaining the process of activism. I was interested in uncovering the processes in which a student commits to and engages in advocacy and allyship, which means I was more interested in understanding the how and why of advocacy and allyship. Grounded theory is well suited to develop new theory where none exists (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-a; Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and to address questions of how and why in order to explain any given processes (Charmaz, 2014; Covan, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Dey, 2007; Hood, 2007). Thus, I adopted a constructivist grounded theory method to develop a substantive theory on the
process in which students with one or more marginalized identities commit to and take part in both advocacy and allyship.

I explain my specific choice to take a constructivist grounded theory approach, opposed to other forms of grounded theory, in greater detail later on in the chapter. However, I want to be forthcoming about the dangers of misunderstanding constructivism as a general term. Schmidt (2007) explains the various ways researchers apply and interpret the idea of constructivism. In the introductory chapter to Schmidt's Histories and Discourses: Rewriting Constructivism, Sandbothe (2007) explains how some scholars view constructivism as the argument that "the brain is seen as [the] autonomous constructor of realities" (p. 2). I agree with other scholars who warn against this strict interpretation of constructivism, which creates as a false dichotomy in which truth is either fully real and objective or fully constructed and subjective (Best, 2017; Schmidt, 2007). I adopt the belief that constructivism helps us to understand the interplay between objective truths and subjective realities. Schmidt explains "the trouble with dualist theories of knowledge can be avoided from the start if one does not begin with object and subjects and the quality of the relation between them, but [instead] with process" (p. 101).

I adopt the view that constructivism allows room for both reality and constructed reality to coexist. I do not deny the real existence of oppression nor believe that lived experiences of marginalized populations can somehow be altered by the individual simply changing their outlook on life. I also believe that existence of oppression is the result of a social contract, which collective action by both the oppressed and oppressor can deconstruct. Specific to my choice in methods, I adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach to acknowledge my own subjectivities in creating theory and to reject some of the positivist
claims of traditional grounded theory research. Furthermore, I analyzed my data by focusing on the process of advocacy and allyship, which helped me avoid the debate about the objective or subjective truth of oppression.

For the remainder of the chapter, I describe the evolution of grounded theory and expand on my choice to use a constructivist grounded theory approach. I then explain the sampling, data generation, and data analysis procedures I used. For ease of reading, I describe these processes in a linear manner; however, it is important to remember that these processes were interlocking. Grounded theory is a constant comparative and iterative process in which the researcher samples, collects data, analyzes the data, and then repeats this process until the researcher can develop a substantive theory (Bryant & Charmaz 2007-a; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, I cycled through and was simultaneously engaged in these procedures throughout my research. A timeline of my research, which details the overlapping data generation and analysis of this study, is located in Appendix A. I end the chapter with an explanation of my positionality, an explanation of how I conducted rigorous and credible grounded theory research, and a discussion of the delimitations and limitations of my study.

**Overview of Grounded Theory**

Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory has evolved into a contested concept with scholars passionately debating the merits of quality grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz-b, 2007). Despite the distinct branches of grounded theory, the goal of grounded theory remains consistent. The goal of grounded theory is to produce substantive or formal grounded theory, which must be grounded in the data. The difference between substantive and formal theory is a matter of scope, with the former focusing on an empirical
area of inquiry and the latter focusing on a conceptual area of theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; p. 33). Substantive theory is "a theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area, such as family relationships, formal organizations, or education" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-c, p. 610). In addition to the goal of generating theory, Hood (2007) argued that there remains three universal, defining features of grounded theory: constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and theoretical saturation. These three tenets of grounded theory are well suited to help the researcher develop new theory.

A constant comparative analysis requires the researcher to continually engage with their data and make abstraction from their data in order to develop emerging theoretical codes (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Cutcliff, 2000; Hood, 2007; Kelle, 2007). With the goal of developing new theory, a constant comparative analysis allows the researcher to develop abstract theoretical codes that are flexible and responsive to new data. Theoretical sampling is a form of purposeful sampling that does not rely on a priori categorizations such as demographics, but rather requires the researcher to sample based on events and categories pertinent to the evolving theory (Charmaz, 2014; Dey, 2007; Hood 2007). In order to develop new theory, theoretical sampling encourages the researcher to look for negative cases to develop a more holistic theory and helps focuses the expended effort. Theoretical saturation requires the researcher to produce enough empirical evidence to support their theoretical claims (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holton, 2007). When the data are sufficiently rich and dense, the researcher may quit gathering data (Holton, 2007). Theoretical saturation allows the final theory produced by the researcher to be grounded and supported by empirical evidence.
Foundations of Grounded Theory

Sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory as a qualitative method that would produce new theory, rather than verify existing theory. Glaser and Strauss aimed to “provide sociologists with a set of categories for writing their theories within a rhetoric of generation, to balance out that of verification” (p. 18). Glaser and Strauss did not argue against the need for verification of existing theory. However, they did argue that the field of sociology was stagnant with researchers verifying old theories, which resulted too often in researchers inappropriately fitting data into existing theories. They argued that in order for the field of sociology to stay relevant, there needed to be a methodological approach to generating theory. Glaser and Strauss believed that sociologists needed a method to produce substantive theory and eventual formal theory that would be grounded in empirical evidence (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-b; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Although Glaser remains adamant that grounded theory methods are applicable to both quantitative and qualitative inquiry (Glaser, 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in general researchers consider grounded theory as distinctly qualitative. Glaser and Strauss’s collaboration was short-lived and, soon, a methodological feud between Glaser and Strauss emerged. The central tension between the Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory lies in the coding process.

One of the major challenges to novice researchers who rely on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) book for grounded theory methods guidance is the elusive way these authors treat the practical application of coding. Glaser and Strauss argued that a constant comparative analysis, in which the researcher is simultaneously collecting data and analyzing their data with codes, produces theoretical notions that eventually lead to substantive theory. However,
they provided little practical advice on how to code data. Instead, they vaguely implied that through this constant comparative process, the researchers will develop initial codes which they then abstract and refine until theoretical saturation is complete and the researcher is able to explain their new theory.

In order to address this critique, Glaser advocated for the use of theoretical coding families and Strauss collaborated with Juliet Corbin to develop a coding paradigm matrix. Glaser accused Corbin and Strauss of straying away from the common cause of grounded theory. Glaser believed that "by applying the concepts of axial coding and coding paradigms, researchers would force categories on the data instead of allowing the categories to emerge" (Kelle, 2007, p. 202). Strauss never responded publicly to the attacks by Glaser (Charmaz, 2014; Kelle, 2007). In addition to their coding differences, Glaser and Strauss differed in their outlook on the literature review. Glaser remained convinced that engagement with the literature prior to conducting research would result in preconceived notions that would bias the results of the research. Strauss was less attached to the idea of entering one's research as a blank slate and recognized that a brief review of the literature was not that problematic, especially for the novice researcher (Covan, 2007).

Covan (2007), who studied under both Glaser and Strauss at the University of California at San Francisco, argued that Glaser could remain faithful to the loose application or no application of a literature review and ambiguous coding procedures because he was a senior researcher who often inserted ideas from his head in order to glean theoretical abstraction (p. 68). In contrast, Strauss recognized that the novice researcher required more guidance and encouraged a review of the literature to develop theoretical sensitivity and believed that a coding matrix would help structure the grounded theory process.
Epistemological Shifts in Grounded Theory

The Discovery of Grounded Theory combined Glaser's positivism training at Columbia University with Strauss's pragmatic training from the Chicago School. By combining their backgrounds, Glaser and Strauss advanced a rigorous qualitative method to develop new theory that is grounded in empirical data. Traditional or classical grounded theorists highly regard the merging of positivism and pragmatism epistemologies in the method (Charmaz, 2014). Despite the differences between the two founders of grounded theory, the fact remains that their brief collaboration produced a methodological revolution that resulted in grounded theory becoming one of the most widely cited qualitative methods (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-b; Hood, 2007).

The pragmatic undertones of grounded theory undergird its popularity. Strauss and Corbin (1997) explained that grounded theory method is one of the most common and influential methods used today by practitioner fields such as accounting, business management, education, nursing, public health, and social work. For Strauss and Corbin, this growth in grounded theory represents a need for theoretical explanations of processes. Silverman and Patterson (2014) connected the growth of grounded theory to the idea that this method has practical relevance. They explained:

For practitioners, the grounded theory approach can reveal the underlying structures that shape communities and the problems faced by the people living in them. An understanding of these structures and the development of theories that explain their connection to everyday life can advance the practical work of professionals. (p. 8).

While the goal of generating substantive theory with practical implications has remained constant in grounded theory, some structures of the approach have evolved.
In the classical grounded theory approach, the researcher enters the field as a *blank slate* in order to create unbiased theory. Entering the research free of bias, traditional grounded theory researchers then generate substantive and formal theory that is generalizable (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holton, 2007). Positivism and postpositivism undergirds the classical grounded theorists’ insistence that the researcher is able to be objective and is thus able to uncover an objective truth in their data (Hood, 2007; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Classical grounded theorist remains steadfast in their belief that "the decision to use classic grounded theory methodology is a full package" (Holton, 2007, p. 286) and do not believe that a researcher should deviate from the original methods and still call it grounded theory.

Conversely, researchers who adopt a postmodern and constructivist interpretation of grounded theory disagree. In these traditions, the researcher uses many, but not all, of the classical methodological procedures set forth by Glaser and Strauss. Researchers who prescribed to a postmodern and constructivist interpretation of grounded theory reject the notion that a researcher is able to conduct research free of bias and therefore incorporate procedures to acknowledge the situational context and inherent bias of the researcher. As grounded theorists who proclaim they are evolving grounded theory, Clarke and Friese (2007) summed up their intentions to incorporate paradigm shifts in understanding:

> We seek to reclaim these [grounded theory] tools from their positivist underpinnings to form a revised, more open-ended practice of grounded theory that stresses its emergent constructivist elements and to use grounded theory method as flexible, heuristic strategies. (p. 367).
Clarke (2003, 2005) advocated for a postmodern evolution of grounded theory, in which the researcher emphasizes contextual aspects of their theory. Clarke and Friese (2007) acknowledged that in his later writings, Strauss addressed postmodern concerns of difference, reflexivity, and positionality. However, in their opinion, Strauss did not fully push grounded theory around the postmodern turn because he and Corbin failed to address the importance of context. For Clarke and other postmodern-grounded theorists, "postmodernism has shifted emphases to partialities, positionality, complications, tenuousness, instabilities, irregularities, contradictions, heterogeneities, situations and fragmentation" (Clarke & Friese, 2007, p. 367). This ontological paradigm shift requires researchers to acknowledge the complexities inherent in their research and recognize that knowledge is situational. In a similar vein, Charmaz (2014) advocated for a constructivist approach to grounded theory inquiry. The constructivist approach pairs the original pragmatism of traditional grounded theory with postmodernism.

Like Clarke, Charmaz (2014) advocated that researchers should contextualize their studies. In addition, constructivist grounded theory incorporates a relativist ontology with a subjectivist epistemology that brings forth "the notion of the researcher as an author" (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Charmaz argued that “researchers must examine rather than erase how their privileges and preconceptions may shape the analysis and that [the researcher’s] values shape the very facts that they can identify” (p. 13). I adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach to my inquiry into how students participate in advocacy and allyship. In doing so, I followed grounded theory methods, contextualized my research, made my own subjectivities explicit to the reader, and was forthcoming with my authorship in the development of my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship.
Constructivist Grounded Theory

Charmaz (2014) pointedly stated, "researchers can use grounded theory strategies without endorsing mid-century assumptions of an objective external reality, a passive, neutral observer, or a detached narrow empiricism" (p. 13). Consequently, constructivist grounded theorists adopt many of the original strategies for generating new theory that Glaser and Strauss (1967) set forth but reject some of their positivist claims (Charmaz, 2008). In many ways, constructivist grounded theory represents an evolution of grounded theory rather than a distinct or separate methodology.

Consistent with classical grounded theory methods, constructivist grounded theorists engage with a constant comparative analysis, in which they simultaneously generate data and analyze data. Furthermore, they also follow a theoretical sampling procedure, which encourages the researcher to use tentative theoretical categories rather than random or representative sampling techniques. They use the tools of memoing and diagramming in order to organize data and abstract theoretical categories. Finally, they strive for theoretical saturation of data, employ empirical checks, examine all possible theoretical explanations of findings, and eventually produce new theory grounded in their data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-a).

Two traits distinguish a constructivist grounded theory approach from other grounded theory approaches. First, the researcher adopts "a position of mutuality between researcher and participant in the research process" (Mills et al., 2006, p. 8). The researcher incorporates reflexivity and relationally of voice as central aspects of the research process. In doing so, constructivist researchers try to minimize the inherent power deferential between the researcher and participant and thus work to create a respectful and trusting relationship (Hall
& Callery, 2001; Hudson, 2015). Second, constructivists researchers acknowledge their role and subjectivity in constructing knowledge. By taking a relativist and subjectivist approach to their research, constructivist grounded theorist acknowledge that their research is not neutral. The researchers' acts are constructed and those who claim neutrality may mask the implication of knowledge that they produce (Charmaz, 2014). The constructivist grounded theorist method:

"produces limited, tentative generalizations, not universal statements. It brings the social scientist into analysis as an interpreter of the scene, not as the ultimate authority defining it. And this method acknowledges the human, and sometimes non-human relationships, that shape the nature of inquiry. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-b, p. 52).

With an understanding of the evolution of grounded theory, the unifying strategies of grounded theory, and the specific relativist and subjectivist understandings that undergirds constructivist grounded theory, I now turn my attention toward explaining why constructivist grounded theory was specifically well suited for my study.

**Constructivist Grounded Theory and My Study**

My study was well suited for grounded theory in general because, one, my research question asked how college students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship and, two, because the goal of my research was to develop a substantive theory on the process of advocacy and allyship where none existed. My study was well suited for constructivist grounded theory because of its intersectional and social justice underpinnings.

Glaser (1978) explains how a theorist is just one of many researchers trying to understand and make meaning of the world:
The grounded theorist is not a theoretical serf. He is merely a theorist among theorists, trying to generate good ideas that fit and work, placing other sociologists and not defying them, claiming analytic freedom, and earning the respect and recognition worthy of his theory and its contribution (p. 9).

In this writing, Glaser recognizes that the author of a theory is not the dictator or sole proprietor of knowledge. I argue that not only is knowledge generated by the efforts of many researchers, but also knowledge is directly related to participants of studies. Unfortunately, in higher education research, our most often-cited grand theories were developed by studying students with all or mostly all dominant identities. Thus, the knowledge gleaned from these studies does not take into account the experiences of students who hold intersecting marginalized and privileged identities.

Higher education researchers may critique dominant theories on their applicability to marginalized populations; however, even this process implicitly values the experiences of dominant identities by creating the dominant experience as the norm to which all other experiences are compared to. I believe this approach to research is often unintentionally unjust. Consequently, I did not try to make my participants' experiences fit into preexisting frameworks that were created from studying people with mostly dominant identities. Instead, I approached my research with the goal of allowing my substantive theory to emerge from the experiences of the participants.

A distinguishing trait of constructivist grounded theory is the effort the researcher takes to create a mutual relationship between with their participants (Charmaz 2014; Hall & Callery, 2001; Hudson, 2015; Mills et al., 2006). In congruence with this characteristic of constructivist grounded theory, I took steps to address the power imbalance between myself
and the participants. For example, during my second interview, I explained my developing theory and specifically elicited feedback from my participants so that their voices were part of the construction of my theory. I also conducted a unique form of member checking in which I presented my complete theory to my participants and invited them to critique it. Although the power imbalance still exists, I hope by incorporating their feedback my participants felt some responsibility for the theory of advocacy and allyship that I generated.

Another distinguishing trait of constructivist grounded theory is the researcher's acknowledgment of subjectivity in creating a theory. By embracing subjectivity, constructivist grounded theory is uniquely poised to support social justice inquiry. Charmaz (2014) explained:

Clearly much research in the area of social justice is objectivist and flows from standard positivists methodologies. A constructivist grounded theory offers an alternative: a systematic approach to social justice inquiry that fosters integrating subjective experience with social conditions. (p. 326).

Charmaz further argued that because social justice research often evokes controversies, constructivist grounded theory method’s emphasis on the subjective nature of inquiry progresses, rather than derails, conversations on some of the most perplexing issues of our times, such as power, privilege and oppression. By emphasizing drawing conclusions based on empirical evidence, contextualizing data, and acknowledging the researcher's own authorship in the theory generation process, constructivist grounded theory lends itself to dialogue, rather than debate. In presenting my theory, I emphasize the empirical evidence that I relied on when creating a category, provide context as much as possible, and am
forthcoming with my own experiences that influenced this research. In addition to adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach, I also embraced an abductive research design.

**Abductive Research Design**

Abductive reasoning begins by examining inductive data and results in the creation of a creative new theory (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, an abductive approach takes on inductive strategies to data analysis, but not all inductive approaches adopt abductive strategies. Compared to deductive analysis that moves from the general to the specific, inductive analysis moves from the specific to the general. "In the context of GTM [grounded theory methods] it [inductive] implies moving up from the detailed descriptive to the more abstract, conceptual levels" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-a, p. 15). However, inductive research often requires the researcher to take great leaps in their abstraction. These leaps often occur without sufficient cases to back up claims or contain selective bias because the researcher chooses which empirical evidence to support their theoretical claims (Bryant & Charmaz -a, 2007; Charmaz, 2014; Reichertz, 2007).

Abduction helps avoid this common pitfall in qualitative inductive analysis because it entertains all theoretical explanations for puzzling findings not accounted for in the researcher's developing theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2014, p. 341; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2014). Although abduction may appear similar to induction, there is one major difference. By entertaining all theoretical explanations, the researcher is able to experience a genuine "surprise" in their data (Reichertz, 2007). "Abduction is therefore a cerebral process, an intellectual act, a mental leap, that brings together things which one had never associated with on another: A cognitive logic of discovery" (Reichertz, 2007, pp. 219-221). By adopting an abductive approach to inquiry, the researcher embraces surprising findings and
works as a detective to find a theoretical explanation of these surprises. If the researcher only adopted an inductive approach, the researcher may prematurely draw conclusions about their findings (Thornberg & Charmaz; 2014).

Reichertz (2007) built on the work of Charles S. Peirce (1974) and identified two strategies for producing abductions. The first strategy is to put pressure on a person to act. This pressure requires the brain to take a leap and draw a hypothesis on a hunch. By not over-thinking the situation, the researcher can take a creative leap and explore from there. The second strategy is to let the mind wander with no specific goal. Reichertz (2007) explained that "abductive inference is an attitude toward data and towards one's own knowledge: Data are to be taken seriously, and the validity of previously developed knowledge is to be queried. It is a state of preparedness for being taken unprepared" (p. 221).

Admittedly, there is some ambiguity in the practicalities of abductive inquiry. In order to prepare to be taken by the unprepared, I adopted Reichertz's second strategy. Through memoing, I explored surprising data and hypothesized theoretical explanations for my findings. I continued this exploration until I reached theoretical saturation and all relevant empirical data fit into my theoretical claims. Below is a memo I wrote early in my dissertation process that illustrates how I explored an unexpected finding:

Many participants are sharing that when they first began their activism they were a 'cool activist' or a 'trendy activists' and not 'a real activist.' Raja even mentioned she was a 'hipster activist'—a term I have never heard of—in high school but is now a 'real activist.' This is surprising to me. When I asked about the difference between a real and not real activist, participants have a hard time explaining the difference.
Someone who is not a real activist is someone who takes actions based on putting forth an image while a real activist is 'doing the real work,' but the actual work does not seem to be all that different (i.e. attending demonstrations, challenging friends, petitioning, etc.) I did not think I would hear so much about navigating one's image of in relation to activism.

From this memo, I began to explore the concept of not being a real activist and all the possible explanations of why someone would participate in activist work but in hindsight not consider this work true activism work. To help with this exploration, I decided to ask the following questions in my second interview with participants:

1) Where and how did you learn about what it means to be an activist?
2) How did you develop your beliefs about advocacy? About allyship?

My participants’ responses to this question eventually lead me to conclude the difference in meaning between being a hipster activist and a real activist was not based on the actual actions that activists take, such as marching versus organizing, nor is it about intentionality or image, as I initially thought. The difference between hipster activist and a real activist is the depth of awareness in understanding oppression. I conclude that as awareness increases, reflection on past activist efforts are judged more critically. By taking an abductive approach to inquiry, I was able to explore the intricacies behind the meaning of a real activist and consequently include these findings in my substantive theory.

Sampling Principles and Procedures

As I previously mentioned, Hood (2007) identified three distinct and universal characteristics of grounded theory research design. These characteristics are: comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and saturation. She further argued that, "without constant
comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation of categories, we have lost the power of the method" (Hood, 2007, p. 152). Hood labels these characteristics as the "troublesome trinity" (p. 163) because these principles are somewhat easy to understand but practically challenging to carry out.

The principle of comparative analysis requires the researcher to engage in sampling, data collection, and data analysis simultaneously (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hood, 2007). Thus, data analysis begins after the first interview and continues throughout the study. Theoretical sampling "means seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory" (Charma

z, 2014, p. 192). Distinct from other forms of general qualitative inquiry, the principles of theoretical sampling ask the researcher to immediately begin analyzing their initial data and then return to the field to collect more data. Thus, the theoretical sampling process is both flexible and focused. "The concept of 'theoretical saturation' is as difficult to explain as it is for more researchers to understand" (Hood, 2007, p. 161). Saturation refers to the saturation of categories, not people, and "refers to the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 345). Figure 1 illustrates the grounded theory approach I took in this research and the exact timeline of the execution of my research is found in Appendix A. Although my sampling, data generation, and data analysis overlapped throughout the process, I present these stages individually for ease of reading. I begin my discussion on sampling by first describing the setting for my research.
Setting

Constructivist grounded theory recognizes the importance of context in research design (Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2003, 2005). Consequently, I want to be as forthcoming as possible in explaining the setting of my research. I recruited participants from two large, predominantly white, institutions located in the state of North Carolina. Several distinct laws and political structures in North Carolina may have influenced the advocacy and allyship efforts for the participants in this study.

**Figure 2:** An Overview of My Grounded Theory Methods

First, in 2015, Margaret Spellings began her role as president of the University of North Carolina's seventeen-school system. Spellings worked as the U.S. Secretary of Education under George W. Bush and oversaw the highly controversial No Child Left Behind Act (University of North Carolina, 2017). Second, a collective protest known as
Moral Mondays has taken place at the state legislative building in Raleigh since 2013. Moral Mondays began as a response to state legislation that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its supporters believed disproportionately restricted voting rights for people of color. The Moral Mondays protest has grown to a collective of individuals who oppose any and all oppressive acts by the North Carolina General Assembly (Forward Together Moral Monday & HKONJ People's Assembly Coalition, n.d.).

Third, North Carolina has a unique legislative history regarding the support or nonsupport of undocumented students and does not provide in-state tuition as some other states do for DACA students (ULead Network, 2017). Fourth, in 2016 the General Assembly passed House Bill 2, which restricted the rights of transgender individuals to use the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity, restricted employment rights for transgender and non-heterosexual individuals, and limited the ability for local governments to regulate wages for their employees (House Bill, 2, 2016). In 2017, House Bill 2 was repealed. (House Bill, 142, 2017). However, many LGBTQ advocates believe House Bill 142 still restricts the rights of LGBTQ individuals.

Fifth, tensions continue to mount regarding the placement of Confederate statues on college campuses and on municipal properties (Billman, 2017). Finally, as I illustrated in the introduction of this paper, campus protests in general are increasing throughout the state. These laws and structures create a distinct political climate that offers students the opportunity to participate in varying types of advocacy and allyship throughout the state. Additionally, my study took place following the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States. The first year of Trump's presidency was marked by national
movement and protest, which also highly influenced my participants advocacy and allyship efforts. In Table 1, I draw upon DuPree (2017) culmination of writings and pictures to highlight a few of the national protest that took place.

### Table 1. National Protests following the Election of Trump

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November, 2016</td>
<td>Protests following the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 2017</td>
<td>Women’s March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January and February, 2017</td>
<td>Anti -Travel/Muslim Ban demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February and March, 2017</td>
<td>Anti-Dakota Access Pipeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2017</td>
<td>International Women’s Day rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2017</td>
<td>March for Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2017</td>
<td>Patriots Day Rally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2017</td>
<td>May Day protests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2017</td>
<td>L.A. Pride #Resist March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2017</td>
<td>Protest over the proposal to repeal the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2017</td>
<td>Counter protests to the Unite the Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2017</td>
<td>Solidarity with Charlottesville rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2017</td>
<td>#Defend DACA rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 2017</td>
<td>Counter protest to White Lives Matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 2017</td>
<td>Anti-Trump rallies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 2018</td>
<td>Still Marching, Women’s March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institutional characteristics.** My study recruited students from two large research and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) within the state of North Carolina. Eight of the participants attended Southeastern University (pseudonym) and two participants attended Southeastern College (pseudonym). At the time this study took place, Southeastern University enrolled approximately 34,000 undergraduate and graduate students and Southeastern College enrolled approximately 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Both institutions have cultural and resource centers that support marginalized students within their schools.
I chose Southeaster University and Southeastern College because of my pre-existing relationships with gatekeepers at these institutions, which helped in my efforts to recruit participants. Additionally, I chose these institutions because of their close proximity to my residency, which helped in the logistics of interviewing in person as well as my ability to observe participants' advocacy and allyship efforts. Finally, by not introducing the variable of institutional type in my analysis and limiting my recruitment efforts to two similar universities, it was easier to saturate theoretical categories. The tradeoff of this decision is that the theory I generated may not be as applicable to other intuitional types or in other regions of the country. I elaborate more on this during the delimitation and limitation section later in this chapter. Nonetheless, because I provide as much context as I can without violating the protocol established with my universities' Institutional Review Board (IRB), this research may have transferability to other settings.

Recruitment

After gaining IRB approval from my university, I coordinated my recruitment efforts with the start of fall semester. I started my recruitment efforts at Southeastern University by emailing gatekeepers who worked with various multicultural groups on campus or taught social justice and diversity curriculum. Two weeks later, I emailed gatekeepers at Southeastern College. I did not need to go through an official IRB process at universities that I was not affiliated with (J. Ofstein, NC State IRB coordinator, personal communication, September 16th, 2016); however, I did contact them by phone to inform them of my study. The IRB approval is located in Appendix B and the gatekeeper email is located in Appendix C.
In my gatekeeper email, I briefly explained my study and the importance of my research. I then asked gatekeepers to forward an announcement of my study to students who are engaged in advocacy and allyship. The announcement of my study found in Appendix D. Gatekeepers chose to either email my announcements to specific students, include it in a newsletter, post it on social media, or physically print it out and post it in their spaces. I was also invited by some gatekeepers to speak at a meeting or in their classroom to advertise and elaborate on my study.

The gatekeepers I reached out to include professional staff at Women's Centers; LGBTQ Centers; TRIO programs; Multicultural Student Affairs; Disability Services Offices; Residential Life; Service Learning Centers; and professors of diversity and inclusion-themed classes. Additionally, I sent the announcement of my research to student organizations specifically comprised of marginalized groups or had a history of participating in advocacy and allyship on their campus. To both help with recruitment and to compensate participants for their time, I offered a $30.00 Visa Gift card to all participants who I selected for my study.

**Participant Selection**

A cornerstone in quality grounded theory research is the application of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hood, 2007). Theoretical sampling includes the process of initial, theoretical, and saturation sampling of participants (Charmaz, 2014). Unlike other saturation sampling techniques, theoretical sampling does not set out with a pre-determined number of participants nor does it take a representative sampling approach. The ultimate goal of theoretical sampling is not to produce repetitive and exhaustive themes, but rather to achieve sufficient density in the data to back up theoretical
claims (Bryman, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hood, 2007; Hudson, 2015; Stern, 2007). Ultimately, the understanding of saturation is based on the judgment of the researcher’s determination of whether the theoretical sampling conducted is adequate enough for analytical claims to ring true, offer useful insights, and allow the analytical claims to be persuasive (Charmaz, 2014; Hudson, 2015; Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004). This process is inherently ambiguous. As Charmaz explained, “theoretical sampling in grounded theory provides a valuable tool for developing your analysis and correcting trouble spots […] Feeling confused and uncertain—but learning to tolerate the ambiguity shows your growth as a researcher” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 212).

Despite the ambiguity, constructivist grounded theory provides some guidelines for sampling. When conducting the initial sample, the researcher should establish sampling criteria for “people, cases, situations, and/or settings before entering the field” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 197). I followed this advice and purposefully recruited participants that met three inclusion criteria. First, participants in my study were undergraduate college students. Second, participants in my study held one or more marginalized identities. Marginalized identities include: a non-white racial identity, a non-Christian spiritual identity, a non-male gender identity, a non-heterosexual sexual orientation, having a cognitive, mental or physical disability, and being from a lower socioeconomic class. Finally, participants demonstrated active engagement in both advocacy and allyship.

In order to help evaluate the fit of potential participants for my study based on the inclusion criteria outlined above, I asked interested participants to fill out a prescreening questionnaire. The prescreening questionnaire gathered demographic information as well as asked potential participants to explain their advocacy and allyship efforts. The prescreening
questionnaire is found in Appendix E. Students who did not fill out the entire prescreening questionnaire were not considered for the study. The prescreening questionnaire proved extremely helpful throughout the initial, theoretical, and saturation sampling phases of this research.

**Initial sampling.** I initially approached this research with a goal to balance the need to operationalize my inclusion criteria for participating in this study with the flexibility needed to engage in theoretical sampling of categories, not people. The first criteria, which stated that participants must be fulltime enrolled in an undergraduate program, focused my efforts to understand how undergraduate students experience advocacy and allyship. The second inclusion criteria, which stated that students must hold both marginalized and privileged identities, supported the intersectional approach to my research. The third inclusion criteria, which stated that participants must be actively engaged in advocacy and allyship, was intentionally broad to create opportunities for maximum comparison of cases.

The language *actively engaged in advocacy and allyship* closely mimics Broido’s (2000) participant criteria in her ally development research. Broido required her participants to be “critically engaged in identifiable ally behaviors” (p. 5). However, she intentionally did not closely define these behaviors because she was interested in what type of ally behaviors students were engaging in. (E. Broido, personal communication, September 21, 2016). I resonated with this logic. I did not predetermine actions associated with allyship and advocacy, but rather allowed these actions to emerge from the data.

However, to increase the explanatory power of my theory, actions needed to be identifiable. Consequently, when deciding if a participant was a fit for my study, I asked myself: *Would a reasonable person be able to make a link between a person’s described...*
actions and an effort to fight oppression? In Chapter Four, I provide a detailed summary of the types of actions my participants took. An overview of these actions included: protesting; lobbying university administration, state, or national governments; engaging in substantial social media efforts; attending or leading a multicultural workshop; petitioning for change; speaking up for marginalized communities and speaking out against problematic language; and participating in general awareness efforts. In practice, my initial sample consisted of five participants. After analyzing the data produce from the first five interviews, I began the theoretical sampling phase of the research.

**Theoretical sampling.** Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally defined theoretical sampling as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect and where to find them, in order to developed his theory" (p. 45). In application, theoretical sampling requires the researcher to build off core categories created by their initial analysis and return to the field to gather more data that further illuminates these emerging categories (Charmaz, 2014; Holton, 2007; Hudson, 2015; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). A key concept in the theoretical sampling is to look for data that helps explain gaps in the researcher's emerging categories as well as identify negative cases that indicate a sharp contrast to the experiences that are influencing the researchers developing core categories (Charmaz, 2014, p. 198; Morse, 2007).

Novice grounded theorists can be subjected to two common pitfalls during their theoretical sampling. First, they may confound theoretical sampling as represented sampling, where the researcher tries to sample as many people as possible based on predetermined variables such as demographics. "Substituting a representational sample for theoretical
sampling can result in the researcher collecting unnecessary and conceptually thin data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 198). To avoid this pitfall, after I analyzed my initial data, I employed an abductive process in order to guide my future sampling efforts based on actions, experiences, and events. Second, grounded theorist researchers sometimes misidentify the goal of theoretical saturation and eventual saturation sampling as trying to gather enough data so no new patterns exist (Morse, 2007). Instead, the goal of theoretical and saturation sampling is to ensure that the researcher's data are sufficiently and conceptually dense (Charmaz, 2014). If the researcher focused on description during data analysis, saturation would never occur (Morse, 2007, pp. 242-243). Consequently, I focused on abstraction and the development of core categories. Once these categories were saturated, I ceased my sampling efforts.

**IRB and theoretical sampling.** Charmaz (2014) recognizes the inherent problems with theoretical sampling and working with IRB. First, a researcher has no way of knowing what categories will emerge from the data, so identifying some of the specifics of data gathering is inappropriate. Second, many IRBs are not familiar with grounded theory, which significantly complicates the approval process. I was very fortunate because the IRB at my institution was both familiar with and supportive of conducting grounded theory research.

In order to make the IRB process as smooth as possible, I made it clear that I intended to have ongoing and evolving interviews loosely based on themes about advocacy and allyship. I also was forthcoming that I would interview participants one to three times based on these themes and that my specific questions would change throughout the process. My interview protocol was broad enough to anticipate flexibility in my research design while also providing adequate information for the IRB process. I receive approval for two amendments to my original IRB protocol. The first was to allow my gatekeepers to post my
research announcement on protected social media sites and the other was to conduct practitioner checks, which I discuss later in this chapter.

**Theoretical sampling in practice.** During my theoretical sampling stage, I both looked for participants who would add to my developing theory on advocacy and allyship and adapted my interview protocol to account for my emerging theory. In practice, my theoretical sampling began after I analyzed data from the first five participants in my initial sample. After analyzing my data from these participants, I realized that four out of five participants came from relatively liberal backgrounds and all five indicated they participate in advocacy and allyship efforts for all marginalized communities identified in my prescreening questionnaire. Therefore, I started to look for participants from conservative backgrounds and participants who identified as activists for only a few marginalized populations, opposed to all marginalized populations. I used the prescreening questionnaire to guide this effort as well as asked my initial participants to recommend other participants who fit my inclusion criteria but differed in ways that were emerging as meaningful. Other theoretical sampling recruitment choices I incorporated to insure maximum comparison between cases include finding participants who varied in their radical and mainstream activist efforts, varied in their pre-college engagement in advocacy and allyship, had different personality traits, and grew up in different parts of the United States.

In addition to purposefully looking to recruit participants who differed in ways that were emerging as significant in my developing theory, I also slightly altered my interview guide throughout the process. The first time I altered the interview guide occurred after my first five interviews. Specific changes in this interview guide included asking the questions: *Have you ever experienced any backlash because of your activist efforts? What motivates*
your activism? Does what you gain personally from your activist efforts versus you allyship efforts differ? After three more interviews (a now total of eight), I added the questions: Where did you get your ideas about effective activism? What has been the biggest challenge in your activist efforts? Each of these additional questions were a direct result of my analysis efforts and were intended to provide more depth to the categories that were emerging from my data.

Additionally, I moved away from asking students to identify which groups they were an activist for and to describe their methods of activism for these groups. I found in my first few interviews that this question was taking up a majority of the time, to the detriment of reducing time to answer the additional questions. When analyzing the data from the first five interviews, I realized there was lot of repetition between the answer to this question and what participants indicated in the prescreening questionnaire. Consequently, I switched to starting the interview by stating which groups participants were an activist for and their methods of activism for these groups based on their answer on the prescreening questionnaire, then asked if there were any other groups or methods that I did not mention.

After a first round of interviews with ten participants, I conducted a second round of interviews. The guiding questions for my second round of interviews directly mapped to the categories of my developing theory. The second-round interview protocol is found in Appendix H. By the time of my second round of interviews, I had whittled my original 603 codes to a more manageable 35 codes and had created a diagram of my developing theory. Specifically, I recognized the need to gain more information pertaining to becoming aware of oppression, learning to be an activist, experimenting with activism, and navigating different beliefs and viewpoints. As I continued to analyze data, memo, and diagram my theory, I
realized that I was approaching saturation of key categories and moved to saturation sampling.

Saturation sampling. Saturation sampling occurs toward the end of the research project when the researcher has developed their core categories. At this point, the researcher's sampling goal is to gather data that will sufficiently saturate a core category, ensuring that their categories "account for as much variation in the data as possible" (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009, p. 121) and thus renders their theory relatively stable. Toward the end of my research, I realized that no new relevant themes were emerging and my categories appeared to be reaching saturation. In order to account for as much variation as possible, I initially wanted to interview students who participated in advocacy and allyship but had stopped these efforts. I believed interviewing these negative cases would help identify gaps in my emerging theory by illuminating where the process of advocacy and allyship broke down for students who no longer participated in advocacy and allyship. While I still think this is the case, I encountered enormous challenges finding true negative cases defined as students who actively engaged in advocacy and allyship but then stopped.

The main challenge was figuring out how to recruit negative cases of this type to participate in my study. The second challenge centered around my broad inclusion criteria that participants must be actively engaged in advocacy and allyship. As I previously mentioned, I did not intentionally set out to determine what specific actions counted as advocacy and allyship, and which did not. This choice allowed me to actively pursue comparative cases by recruiting participants who varied in their actions. However, an unforeseen tradeoff of this decision was that it made it difficult to find a participant who fully
stopped his or her advocacy and allyship because so many actions counted as advocacy and allyship.

To recruit participants thus far, I had primarily relied on gatekeepers who announced my research to their various students. After informal conversations with these gatekeepers, they indicated that they really were not in touch with participants who had fully stopped advocacy and allyship and they did not feel comfortable reaching out to these students with the explicit goal of asking them to participate in a research project. I decided to ask current participants in the study if they had friends who may have been engaged in activism but have since stopped. Initially, some said yes; however, after further inquiry it became clear that these friends had not stopped advocacy and allyship, but rather they had changed their type of activism. In talking with my current participants, it became clear that they could not identify friends who had completely stopped their advocacy and allyship. Because the current participants in my study had similarly evolved or changed their advocacy and allyship efforts, I did not think that seeking out more participants who had also done so would produce valuable data. Instead, I went back to my data and realized that I had some participants who seemed to be ramping up their activism while others seemed to be slowing decreasing their efforts, although I do not want to give the impression that they had stopped completely.

To reach the criteria of saturation sampling, I decided to focus my last interviews with the two participants who showed signs of their advocacy and allyship waning by digging deep into why their efforts were decreasing. I then returned back to the data from other participants to see if some of the reasons mentioned for their decrease in effort matched how others responded to the questions from previous interviews such as: *Has your activism*
ever waned? and Has there ever been a time where you became aware of or witnessed oppression or discrimination toward a group or an individual and did not take action? From this data, I was able to identify areas in my theory that suggest why students may stop participating in advocacy and allyship.

**Data Generation**

I generated data primarily through one-on-one interviews and supplemented these interviews with prescreening questionnaires, observational data, member checks, and practitioner checks. The goal of grounded theory data generation is to produce rich and sufficient data that the researcher uses to develop conceptual categories that eventually lead into theoretical integration toward the phenomena under study (Charmaz, 2014). In congruence with grounded theory methods, my data generation was continuous and evolving. In the paragraphs below, I detail the practical steps I took during my interviews and observations to gather rich data related to advocacy and allyship as well as discuss how member checking and practitioner checks were used to support my theoretical claims.

**Prescreening questionnaire**

My prescreening questionnaire asked potential participants to explain their advocacy and allyship efforts and collected demographic information. I used the survey software Qualtrics to develop the questionnaire and used the anonymous survey link function to administer it. By using the anonymous link, neither myself nor Qualtrics had access to IP addresses. However, the prescreening questionnaire did ask for the participants' email so I could follow up with them if they were a good fit for my study. As such, emails of potential participants were stored in Qualtrics reports, which only myself and the Qualtrics company
has access to. Once I successfully defended my dissertation, I deleted the prescreening questionnaire and no records of participants email are saved.

Forty individuals started the prescreening questionnaire, but only seventeen completed it. If a potential participant did not complete the questionnaire, I did not consider them for participation in the study. Some participants who completed the questionnaire and were selected for the study did not return my emails inviting them to participate. In other cases, some potential participants filled out the survey but fell outside the inclusion criteria because they were graduate students. In the end, ten participants who filled out the prescreening questionnaire participated in the study. In addition to using the prescreening questionnaire to measure a participants’ fit for my study, I used this data in my descriptive analysis to explain what types of actions students take to fight oppression.

**Interviews**

My primary source of data collection were interviews. Charmaz (2014) described three types of interviews generally used in research: intensive, informal, and investigative. Intensive interviewing consists of the researcher asking a series of gentle guiding questions so that the participant may elaborate on personal experiences related to the phenomenon. In informal interviewing, the researcher is more concerned with accurate descriptions of events than an understanding of how the participant experiences these events. Similarly, in investigative interviewing, the researcher focuses on obtaining an accurate description of an event but often employs direct or even confrontational questions in order to uncover hidden actions of the participant.

I used an intensive interviewing technique, in which I focused on gaining the trust of my participants and building a rapport with them. I was more interested in learning how my
participants experienced their advocacy and allyship, rather than simply learning a description of their actions or judging the effectiveness of their actions. Because of my genuine interest in my participants’ experiences, I created an interviewing atmosphere that was open to emerging ideas and encouraged participants to feel empowered to elaborate and make meaning of their own experiences. Several times throughout the interview process, participants remarked that they felt safe and shared some extremely personal stories that they had not shared with many others.

Participants also shared that the interview process allowed them to critically reflect on their own advocacy and allyship in ways they had never done. After our interviews, one participant emailed me and said, "I want to thank you for the two dynamic and thought-provoking interviews. Having the opportunity to find the words for my truth was challenging and ultimately beneficial to where I stand as an activist." I feel so fortunate to have interacted with all ten of my participants and so humbled and grateful to have heard their stories.

I conducted two rounds of face-to-face interviews with each of my ten participants, totaling twenty interviews. My first interview occurred in August 2017 and my last interview took place in December 2017. As previously mentioned, my interview questions evolved throughout the process and the interview guides are found in Appendix G and H. Interviews ranged from one to two hours and averaged seventy-five minutes.

To begin my interviews, I described the purpose and procedure of my study. I then shared the consent form, asked if the participant had any questions and to sign the consent form if they agreed to participate in the study. All participants approved the audio recording of the interview. Each participant was given the opportunity to choose their pseudonym and
if they did not want to pick a pseudonym, I let them know that I could choose one for them. All participants ended up choosing their pseudonym. Interviews were semi-structured with questions focusing on the student's involvement in advocacy and allyship. I recorded the interview on my password-protected computer and on a recorder from the library to make sure there were no technical difficulties. After the interview, I uploaded the interview from the recorder onto my computer and deleted the file from the recorder.

After each interview was complete and stored on my computer, I sent the audio file to the transcription service Rev under a pseudonym for each participant. To secure data, Rev uses TLS 1.3 encryption and never shares files. Once Rev returned a transcript, I stored it on my password-protected computer.

**Observations**

I entered my research with the intent to observe participants in visible forms of advocacy and allyship because observational data could help me achieve the goal of saturation. The goal of grounded theory is to saturate developing categories, not data. Charmaz (2014) argued that mixed qualitative methods that incorporate other forms of data beyond interviews can both strengthen and speed up grounded theory research because it significantly adds to researchers’ abilities to saturate categories in their developing theories (pp. 107-108). She further argued that grounded theory studies with relatively few individuals can still be meaningful and meet the rigorous criteria of saturation categories by collecting other forms of data.

To this end, observational data both complements individual interviewing and can significantly help progress a developing theory by providing greater insight into the phenomena (Charmaz, 2014; Timmermans & Tavory, 2007; Turner, 1981). Furthermore,
observational data is poised to help the researcher understand how a participant makes meaning of their experience (Blumer, 1969). Because I was interested in the meaning behind my participants’ experience in advocacy and allyship, I wanted to specifically observe their visible forms of activism. At the end of the first interview with each participant, I asked if they were planning any visible forms of activism and if they were open to me observing their efforts. Because of the nature of visible activism, which often occurs quickly and as a reaction to unjust policies, I also encouraged participants to inform me of any advocacy and allyship efforts that I could observe them in.

In planning to also collect observation data, I ran the risk that there would not be any advocacy and allyship actions to observe from my participants. While this was true, I relied on evidence that suggested that advocacy and allyship is prevalent and increasing on college campuses (Broadhurst 2014; Eagan et.al, 2015; Jacoby, 2017; Rhoads, 1998). Because I had no guarantee of collecting observational data, I remained committed to the goal of saturating developing categories, which could be achieved through interviews alone. Nonetheless, I was lucky and was invited by one participant, Raja, to observe her at the #Defend DACA rally, which she organized after the Trump administration issued a memorandum on the recession of DACA (Department of Homeland Security, 2017).

Patton (2015) explained the power of observation but warns the novice researcher not to go into the field blind and attempt to observe all the things they can for all the people they can. Thus, I adopted what Altmann (1974) called the “focal-animal” sampling technique, which meant I intensely focused on only the actions of my participant while observing her at the #Defend DACA rally. The observation protocol is located in Appendix I. I met Raja at 7 a.m. on the morning of the rally and shadowed her until the rally was over and cleaned up at
around 4 p.m. I took notes on her actions, her body language, and asked how she was feeling throughout the event. After the #Defend DACA rally, I interviewed her about her experience and about some of my observations. These questions are included at the end of the observation protocol.

When starting this research and planning to collect potential observational data, there was inherent ambiguity concerning how I was going to use observational data. First, I was not certain the opportunity would present itself. Second, if the opportunity presented itself, I had no way of knowing how far I would be in my theoretical sampling and data analysis. As it turned out, Raja was the only participant to invite me to observe her advocacy and allyship in action and she did so as I was completing the first round of interviews with my participants. Thus, I was able to use this observational data in my efforts to enhance developing categories of my theory. This data was treated in the same manner as interview data, as I coded it and integrated it into my developing theory. In presenting my findings in Chapter Four, I use Raja's story as a way illustrates salient concepts in my substantive theory. The last forms of data collection include my member checks and practitioner checks that I conducted toward the end of my research.

**Member Checks**

In order to ensure accuracy in my theoretical categories and my substantive theory, I conducted member checks. Mertens (2010) described member checks as a process where the “researcher seeks verification with the respondent groups about the constructions that are developing as a result of data collected and analyzed” (p. 269). I used member checks both informally and formally. Informally, I employed member checks by summarizing the responses given during interviews and ask the participants if I was understanding them
correctly. During the second round of interviews, I explained salient ideas generated from my data analysis thus far and asked for feedback on these ideas.

Formally, I used member checks by presenting my participants a summary of my theory and gave them an opportunity to provide feedback on my theory. Specifically, I asked the following questions: *Could they see themselves in the theory? Was their personal advocacy and allyship story was captured in the processes I laid out? Was the model clear to them? Was something was missing that they thought was extremely important for students to commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship? and Was there something in the model that does not apply to them?*

Five out of ten participants responded to this formal attempt at member checking. All five participants agreed that they saw themselves in the model I presented them. Some of the participants believed that the model was unclear in sections or that small pieces of their story were not included in the overall substantive theory. When this occurred, I engaged in a constructive conversation with my participants and sought to understand where the different perceptions were coming from. Most often, the difference in perception was a direct result of something particular to their experience but did not occur in another participant’s experience. Other times it was because I did not present my entire Chapter Four findings to my participants and the summary explanation did not address some of their concerns. I accounted for all participant feedback when explaining my findings in Chapter Four. The final form of data collection generation occurred from my use of practitioner checks.

**Practitioner Checks**

Practitioner checks are used to understand the usability and applicability of a substantive theory for individuals most closely associated with the process being studied
(Charmaz, 2014; Cooney, 2011; Hudson, 2015). I emailed four practitioners in the field of higher education who support students engaged in advocacy and allyship and provided them a summary of my substantive theory. Specifically, I elicited feedback from these practitioners on the utility of my theory. The email I sent out as well as the informed consent document are found in Appendix J and Appendix K, respectfully. All four practitioners provided me with feedback. One practitioner worked for the LGBTQ center on campus, one worked for the Women's Center, one worked for the Service Learning center on campus, and the last worked in Residential Education.

In the practitioner checks, I asked the following questions: How well does the theory reflect what you've observed with your students in your professional role? Does the theory make sense overall? Is there something missing in the theory? Is this theory something that you might find useful in informing your practice, in terms of helping you provide support to students who participate in advocacy and allyship? If so, how? Overall, practitioners felt that the theory reflected what they observed with students, felt that the theory made sense, and could not find anything significant missing in from the theory. Most importantly, practitioners felt that this theory could be useful in their efforts to support and encourage advocacy and allyship. I explain how practitioners found my theory useful in Chapter Five.

Data Analysis

My data analysis consisted of coding, extensive memo writing, and diagraming with an emphasis in abductive strategies to support the development of substantive theory on advocacy and allyship. Abductive reasoning is similar to inductive reasoning in that themes emerge from the data; thus, I did not have an a priori coding scheme. As previously discussed, abductive reasoning builds from inductive reasoning by examining puzzling
concepts that have emerged in the inductive process and explores all possible explanations of this puzzling data (Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). During my analysis, I did not shy away from puzzling or contradictory findings. Instead, I leaned into the process more, and tried to unravel the mystery of complex data through memoing and collecting more data. I enhanced the theoretical sensitivity I gained from my initial review of the literature by asking analytical questions about my data such as: What is this data indicative of? and What is the bigger meaning here? Ultimately, I developed theoretical categories through greater and greater abstraction from the data so that the analysis of my data coalesced into a substantive theory around advocacy and allyship.

**Coding Procedures**

Because I generated a large amount of interview data, I used the transcription service, Rev. Once I received a transcription back, I listened to the interview and corrected any mistakes in the transcript. I used the Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) NVivo to organize and code my data. There are many QDAS tools on the market and it is important to find a QDAS package that provides the tools that fit with the research being conducted (Gibbs, 2014; Gilbert, Jackson, & di Gregorio, 2014; Stewart, 2012). I used the NVivo as my QDAS because of its ability to create diagrams, link memos and modify codes were user friendly and useful in developing theory.

In keeping in line with the grounded theory strategy of staying immersed in the data, I coded each interview within a few days of receiving the transcript. Star (2007) stated that, in general, "codes setup up a relationship with your data, and with your respondents" (p. 80). During the entire coding process, I practiced a constant comparative method in which I compare earlier and later interviews with one another to establish any analytic distinctions
between them. Dey (2007) explained that "one virtue of constant comparison as a method in grounded theory is that it protects against the tendency to over interpret data and find connections where they are none" (p. 178). In order to make the balance of data generation (conducting interviews) and data analysis (coding and memoing) manageable, I staggered my interviews. Over the course of the research process, I moved from initial coding to more focused coding as I developed my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship.

**Initial coding moving toward focus coding.** For my first five interviews, I employed a line-by-line code technique which resulted in the generation of 603 initial codes. In order to help efficiently generate theory, I centered my coding efforts on actions through coding with gerunds (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978) and used *in vivo* codes where possible. Eventually, the use of 603 codes began to be unmanageable. Consequently, I stopped both interviewing and coding and concentrated on merging, collapsing, and discarding current codes. Because of the large amount of data, I did not do much memoing during this phase; rather, I relied on my ability to identify similar themes. It is important to note that no actual data was lost and once I finished merging my codes, I went back to ensure that each quote still fit the code it was assigned to. During this process, I whittled my 603 initial codes to 167 codes.

Data collection resumed and I progressed toward chunk-by-chunk coding using these 167 codes. As I continued to be immersed in my data, I slowly merged even more codes and toward the end of my first round of interviews, I had 80 codes. At this point, I paused my data collection and coding efforts again and extensively memoed about each of my remaining codes as I progressed toward greater abstraction. Below is a sample of memos that I was writing during this time:
Activism Journey as a Metaphor: I would like to use this in my profile write up.

Activism Waning: I want to look at this more. Is there a connection to activism waning and time/effort? Experiencing backlash? All the participants still identify as activist—how do they overcome and still advocate at the end of the day? Perhaps in the challenges sections is where I will get more about activism waning.

Advocating: I am noticing that most of the participants seem to need to be prodded to think about advocacy vs allyship; however when asked a bit about it most have an opinion. In this category we see many participants being an advocate first or primary. Is advocacy always first? Most believe that part of their advocacy is simply "being"- it is their identity.

Attending Rallies: I discarded this code because it is descriptive. I should at some point include what kind of activism work they participate in. However, the code in and of itself does not describe how a person commits to advocacy and allyship nor does it really describe the process of advocacy and allyship. I kept the child codes of "becoming energized" and "wanting to be heard" because maybe that is more indicative of the process.

Becoming Aware of Oppression: I think this will be a core category. There is becoming aware of oppression that effects a person's identity, aware of oppression of other marginalized groups and connecting systematic oppression. There are a lot of emotions that come with becoming aware of oppression such as "experiencing fear, anger, frustration, dishearten." I deleted these child nodes because this is something that happens—I think it may be easier to code as experiencing "negative" emotions (although the word negative is not necessarily correct). I need to revisit later.
I need to hash out if becoming aware of oppression and experiencing oppression is similar or different. It feels different in some ways; however, through experiencing oppression one usually becomes aware of oppression.

There is also potentially a connection of becoming aware and "gaining new understanding of a situation." It’s like people become aware of oppression or a new act or facet of oppression, they process it and then their lens widens.

**Becoming Frustrated:** described a time where activism waned so I collapsed it there. Through extensively memoing on these 80 codes, I ended up with 35 process-oriented codes. With these 35 codes, I formed a hypothesis of advocacy and allyship, developed an initial diagram, created an interview guide for my second round of interviews, and moved toward focused coding.

**Focused coding moving toward theoretical integration.** Focused coding moves preliminary codes toward abstract categories. The abstract categories generated eventually lead to theoretical integration and the development of a substantive theory. According to Charmaz (2014), focused coding “means concentrating on what your initial codes say and the comparisons you make with and between them” (p. 140). The ultimate goal of my focused coding was to develop theoretical codes that illustrated the process in which students participate in advocacy and allyship. Thus, I compared my 35 codes and made decisions to abstract key concepts around advocacy and allyship. I used these 35 codes to develop a second interview protocol to specifically gain a greater depth of understanding into the emerging process of advocacy and allyship.

I coded the second round of interviews using chunk-by-chunk coding and continued under the framework of my 35 codes. To continue with my efforts to reach continuously
greater abstraction, I wrote extensive memos and focused on which of the 35 codes represented concepts that were essential to the process of advocacy and allyship. As I coded the last interviews, I realized that no new information relevant to my categories was emerging from my analysis and thus I rendered the data theoretically sufficient (Charmaz, 2014; Dey 2007). I then moved my analysis toward theoretical integration.

Theoretical integration uses extensive memoing and diagraming to flesh out which abstracted concepts rise to the level of categories and which category emerges as the core category (Charmaz, 2014; Hudson, 2015; Lempert, 2007). Categories are the greatest abstracted concepts that help explain an overall process. The core category is the category that has the greatest explanatory power and relates to all other categories (Charmaz, 2014; Holton, 2007; Hudson, 2015). My substantive theory contains six categories: Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected, Experiencing Affirmation, and the core category: Doing the Right Something. During the final phase of analysis, I not only identified these categories but also wrote memos and diagrams to flesh out their properties, dimensions and relationships to one another.

Memoing and Diagramming

As I have demonstrated, throughout my data analysis I used memos to organize my thoughts and draw logical connections. Memoing is a central strategy to help abstract theoretical categories from initial codes. "If data are the building blocks of the developing theory, memos are the mortar" (Stern, 2007, p. 119). Memos link the researcher data to their emergent theory and are useful in several ways. First, they provide an avenue for the researcher to have an intellectual conversation with themselves. During this conversation,
the researcher gains clarity, distinguishes their minor and major codes, and chronicles their thoughts. These records become invaluable as the researcher makes decisions regarding future data analysis (Stern, 2007). Second, memos are a great source for creativity to explore the puzzling and surprising findings inherent in the abductive logic of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Finally, memos encourage the researcher to move away from describing the data and into processes of abstraction and eventual discovery of theory (Stern, 2007). In summary, memoing facilitates the generation of theory.

I began memoing as soon as I started collecting data by journaling my initial thoughts after each interviewed and detailing the current events that related to advocacy and allyship. To illustrate this effort, my first memo is included below:

8/18/17, 12:45PM. It is 15 minutes before my first interview. On Saturday, 8/12/17 Heather Heyer was killed by a white supremacist and as I write, right now there is a march in my home town because there are rumors of the KKK coming. I am distracted and pulled in different directions. Should I be there right now? Talking about activism without being an activist in this moment feels ... guilty.

Yesterday was the solar eclipse and overall the country kind of felt a "unity" after the racial tension building sense Charlottesville. Trump did announce that we would put more troops in Afghanistan and that we are not interested in nation-building but in killing terrorists. There continues to be the call to remove Confederate statues. At Duke a statue of Robert E. Lee was removed from the chapel. Demonstrations continue to build against Silent Sam's statue on UNC's campus. Roy Cooper has asked that all Confederate statues be removed, however, he wants it done peacefully and in accordance to the proper channels.
8/18/17, 2:30PM. I am excited to review the transcripts and practice deep listening from this interview. Raja made me think of family values playing such a central role to her desire to do good. I wonder about the experience of individuals who did not have family values of doing good or who come from less liberal background bubbles. Raja seemed very hopeful and excited to talk about her activism work. I wonder if this will be the same for everyone. Raja is a very active student and a recipient of a prestigious scholarship. Is there a difference between high achieving students and other college student activist? I was really happy with Raja’s interview and I was most struck by her optimism and her defining activist work, primarily through structured involvement with the Women’s Center and the LGBTQ center, although she certainly stated that she speaks up against problematic language and attends protests, etc. I realized that by wording "what groups are you an activist for and how," I did not get an in-depth answer on what Raja hoped to accomplish through her activism. With my second interview, I hope to ask the participants what causes are they an activist for and maybe this will produce a different answer.

At first my memos were sloppy; however, my memos became more refined as I move toward developing my theoretical categories. In order to help organize my memos, I linked my memos to codes and used strategies such as bolding and coloring text to maintain organization. In addition to memoing, I relied on diagramming to organize and develop a relational understanding of my theoretical codes. Diagramming creates a visual representation of categories and their relationship (Charmaz, 2014, p. 218). I hand drew, used Nvivo’s diagram tool, and PowerPoint to create my model.
Positionality and Subjectivity of the Researcher

Adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach requires researchers to acknowledge what influenced their decisions to pursue the research and to acknowledge aspects of themselves which also influences the development of their emerging theories (Charmaz, 2014; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). During my work in student affairs, I have worked specifically with LGBTQ students, veteran students, students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are members of a minority religion. In most instances, I have worked with these students as intact groups; however, I have also worked with programs that intentionally attempt to increase dialogue and interactions among these marginalized groups. In this work, I have noticed that some student advocates become committed to ending oppressions for all marginalized populations while other student advocates either demonstrate no interest in the experiences of other marginalized groups, continue having their own prejudicial thoughts of other groups, or even increase their prejudicial thoughts of other groups. Thus, I began to question why some student advocates become allies and others do not.

Additionally, in my work, I have been exposed to various diversity and inclusion curriculum, ally workshops, and social justice initiatives. At points, I have been frustrated because I feel like these efforts glaze over the complexities of intersecting systems of oppression and intersecting identities. I have also seen my students hurt and frustrated by the efforts of well-meaning administrators who just do not get it. I wanted to understand the student activist process from the students' point of view to avoid the risk of becoming an administrator who is perceived as or who actually is dismissive of advocacy and allyship efforts.
Furthermore, as an activist myself, I have reflected on how my advocacy efforts are similar and different compared to my allyship efforts. I acknowledge that through these experiences, I have developed an interest in studying this topic. In addition to identifying how I became interested in studying advocacy and allyship, it is also important to be forthcoming with my marginalized and privileged identities because they most certainly influence how I approach this research.

I am queer in both gender and sexual orientation and am Unitarian Universalist, which is a non-mainstream faith. I am also white, able-bodied, upper-middle class, an American-born citizen, and educated. When conducting this research, I tried to be aware of how my interactions with marginalized groups that I identify with differ from my interactions with marginalized groups with which I did not identify with. I cannot change my membership in marginalized and privileged groups, but I did have the professional responsibility to recognize my membership and the role it may play in my research.

A final consideration in explaining my positionality concerns my choice to take a constructivist grounded theory approach to my study. I was first introduced to the ideas of social constructivism in my undergraduate sociology work. I remember sitting in class when one of my favorite professors asked, "How did you come to know what you know?" During this class, my professor introduced me to the works of Émile Durkheim, Max Scheler, Karl Mannheim, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann. My fundamental view on knowledge, and how we obtained knowledge, changed by the end of that class.

I have considered myself a constructivist ever since that class because I believe that knowledge is socially influenced, contextual, and evolving. I also believe that I cannot erase my own subjectivity, nor should I strive to do so. Consequently, I must be forthcoming with
this subjectivity. Charmaz (2014) justified her use of the term *constructivism* "to acknowledge subjectivity and the researcher's involvement in the construction and interpretation of data [....] subjectivity is inseparable from social existence" (p. 14). I am consciously using the choice to use the words *my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship* because I recognize that I am the constructor of the theory presented here. While I strove to back up my theoretical claims with relevant data, I also acknowledge that I brought my own interpretive lens to the analytical process.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are always present when working with marginalized groups. I worked with my institution's IRB in order to ensure that I was in line with best research practices when working with vulnerable populations. I took into account that even though I changed the names of my participants, I could not guarantee their confidentiality because their words and actions may provide identifiable information. I was upfront with this concern to my participants. In addition, because this study relied on participants’ narratives to develop a model toward advocacy and allyship, I ran the risk of misrepresenting my participants’ stories. I used both member checking and the participants’ own words to lower this risk.

One of the biggest and most specific ethical concerns of this study is the potential for students to feel shame or guilt about their advocacy and allyship because I explicitly asked participants why they did not act in certain instances. While conducting this research, I tried to create and maintain a non-judgmental atmosphere by relaxing my body language, relating to participants when they mentioned a struggle and allowing space for quiet reflection when a participant could not quickly respond to a question. Additionally, during our interviews, sometimes a participant would say *I know this is bad but I don't do x, y or z.* When this
happened or when participant appeared self-deprecating, I responded by asking the participant to "be gentle with themselves" and reminded them that anti-oppression work is challenging and then thanked them for doing what they are already doing. Beyond striving to not shame or guilt the participants, the non-judgmental atmosphere helped ensure that participants were truthful in their responses during the interview.

A final ethical consideration concerns how to give appropriate credit to the participants who helped create this model. While I, as the researcher, will be cited for the creation of a model toward advocacy and allyship, the participants’ voices who are interviewed should be given due recognition. In order to give due recognition to my participants while maintaining their confidentiality, I want to be forthcoming and acknowledge that my theory would not have come into existence had I not been so fortunate to hear the incredible stories of the participants in this study. I believe that I cannot overstate this fact and hope that my theory on advocacy and allyship is used to support and encourage more students in activist efforts.

**Ensuring Rigorous and Credible Research**

Similar to the debates surrounding what is and is not proper grounded theory, researchers who use grounded theory methods also debate how to judge the rigor and credibility of a grounded theory study (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007-b). Much of these debates center on operationalizing Glaser and Strauss's four original criteria for quality grounded theory: fit, work, relevance, and modification (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). *Fit* refers to the expectation that the theory is derived from empirical evidence. *Work* refers to the ability of the theory to predict behavior. *Relevance* refers to the theory's practical utility. Finally, *modification* refers to the ability for the theory to be adapted as new data emerges.
Because I adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach, I used Charmaz's (2014) criteria for measuring the quality of my research when developing my theory. Charmaz acknowledged that expectations of research may vary; however, she provides four criteria to assess the quality constructivists grounded theory: credibility, originality, resonance, usefulness. Table 1 provides an adaptation of Charmaz (2014, pp.337-338) criteria for assessing quality grounded theory and includes a list of questions that researcher can ask themselves to judge the quality of their study and the substantive theory they generated.

Table 2. Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Constructivist Grounded Theory

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<th>Criteria</th>
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| Credibility    | Has the researcher achieved intimate familiarity?  
Are the data sufficient to merit the claims? Consider the range, number and depth contain in the data.  
Did the research make systematic comparisons between operations and between categories?  
Did the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations?  
Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and the argument presented in the findings?  
Has the researcher provided enough evidence for their claims to all the reader to form an independent assessment and agree with the claims? |
| Originality    | Are the categories fresh? Do the offer new insights?  
Does the analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?  
Does the theory have social and theoretical significance?  
How well does the theory challenge, extend or refine current ideas, concepts and practices? |
| Resonance      | Do the categories portrayed the fullness of the studied experience?  
Has the theorist revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for granted meanings?  
Has the theorist drawn links between larger collectives or institutions and indiuval lives, when the da so indicated?  
Does the grounded theory make sense to the participants or people who share the circumstances? |
| Usefulness      | Does the analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds?  
Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?  
Has the theory contributed to knowledge and making a better world? |
I entered and ended my research with these criteria in mind. To ensure credibility and saturation of data, I present properties, dimensions and the relationships between categories and provide evidence from my data to illuminate the nuances of each category. To ensure originality, I conducted a review relevant literature to make sure that my theory addressed a gap and I explicitly explain the theoretical and practical relevance of my theory in both the introduction and conclusion of this study.

To ensure resonance, I employed informal member checks during the second round of interviews and formal member checks at the end of my research, which provided participants the opportunity to provide feedback on my developing theory. In this process, I explicitly asked if the participants could see themselves in my theory, which they did. Finally, to ensure usefulness, I conducted practitioner checks in which I explicitly asked higher educational professionals if they found my theory useful and I offer opportunities for future research in Chapter Five. Ultimately, the reader gets to assess the quality of my research based on the above criteria.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

Delimitations describe intentional choices by the researcher which defines the constraints of their research while limitations describe unplanned limits of their research (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first delimitation of my research concerns the generalizability of my findings and theory. By choosing a qualitative approach to inquiry, I intentionally approached this research with the understanding that my research would not produce generalizable results. In qualitative research, the major objective is not to produce findings that are generalizable in a greater context but rather to provide enough detailed information so that the reader can judge for themselves the applicability of the findings (Creswell, 2007;
Hudson, 2015; Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this criteria as *transferability*. Consequently, I strove to sufficiently illustrate the situational context of my research, acknowledged my own positionality, and provided a detailed account of how I developed my substantive theory pertaining to advocacy and allyship. Nonetheless, because this research takes place in a specific setting in North Carolina, at a specific time, with specific and unique participants, any reader trying to apply my theory in other settings must remain cautious and strive to understand my theory in relation to context. In addition to this delimitation of my theory, my experience as a graduate student with finite time and resources presented some challenges that resulted in practical limitations for my study.

Perhaps the largest practical limitation is the challenge I faced in finding a true negative case. Negative cases "typically refer to data that demonstrate sharp contrast with the major pattern that accounts for most of the data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 198). For my study, a true negative case would be a student who engaged in advocacy or allyship and then completely stopped their activism efforts. As I explained earlier in the Chapter, after reaching out to gatekeepers and current participants in the study, it became clear that it was too challenging to recruit college-age students who strongly identified as non-activists to participate in my study because of the constraints of time, resources, and access to potential participants. To address this practical limitation, I focused my final interviews with students who showed signs that they were retreating from advocacy and allyship or who were changing focused of their advocacy and allyship by asking questions to why they were taking a step back. These negative instances help render my theory saturated despite not having a true negative case.
A second practical limitation is the challenges associated with working with Institutional Review Board (IRB), specifically as it relates to the time it takes to gain approval to changes in a research protocol. While my experience with IRB was positive and professional, the simple fact is that the process to amend a research protocol takes time. As I was conducting my interviews and beginning to develop my theory of advocacy and allyship, I realized that interviewing adults who took part in advocacy and allyship while they were in college may significantly add to my theory because their stories may illuminate how students develop a sustained commitment to advocacy and allyship. Due to the time it would take for me to recruit adult participants, develop my interview questions, and work with IRB to amend my initial research protocol, I decided it was impractical for me to explore this option. Consequently, my theory addresses how a college student commits to and engages in advocacy and allyship but does not address how a person develops a sustained commit to advocacy and allyship.

The final limitation of my research is that I was unable to recruit black males to participate in my study. Although, theoretical sampling intentionally incorporates the idea of not sampling participants based on pre-constructed categories such as race and ethnicity, given that my topic is on advocacy and allyship and that many national activist movements concern the killing of unarmed black males, not having black males in my study is a limitation. I believe that having black male voices in my study could add robustness to my theory and specifically elevate the killing of black men by police to act as a greater influence in the sociopolitical climate.
Expected Impact of Study Revisited

This research is greatly important and builds on the body of work that informs best practices for colleges and universities in their efforts to increase civic engagement outcomes through encouraging and supporting students in their advocacy and allyship. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, I developed a substantive theory on processes of both advocacy and allyship in college students. As long as diversity and inclusion initiatives and civic engagement are priorities at colleges and universities, and as long as students at these colleges and universities identify with both marginalized and privileged identities, this research will be relevant because it attempts to explain the complex processes in which students commit to ending oppression.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have explained the evolution of grounded theory. I have argued that although grounded theory has evolved since Glaser and Strauss (1967), the core tenets of constant comparisons, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation remain in all forms of grounded theory. I have explained the relativist and postmodern ontological shifts that contribute to the constructivist grounded theory approach. I have illustrated that the subjectivity and acknowledgement of the situational context in one's research distinctly characterizes constructivist grounded theory. After explaining the evolution of grounded theory, I explain my overlapping sampling, data generation, and data analysis procedures. I provided a statement of my own positionality relative to my research and choice of constructivist grounded theory. I further offered criteria the reader can use to assesses the rigor and credibility of my study.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I offer a summary of my findings and present the substantive theory of advocacy and allyship that I generated from my research. To contextualize my study, I begin by presenting an overview of the advocacy and allyship efforts of my participants as well as a summary of their demographic information, upbringing, and values. I then offer a brief discussion on the challenges with language and the different meanings of key terms between myself and my participants. I proceed to delineate key grounded theory terms that I use to explain my model. When appropriate, I draw upon my own personal experience as an advocate and ally, which influences my interpretation of my participants’ experiences. Finally, I present my substantive theory about the process in which college students commit to and partake in advocacy and allyship.

As explained in the previous chapter, I generated my model primarily by analyzing interview data. However, I also observed one participant, Raja, as she organized and executed a #Defend DACA rally in response to Trump’s announcement that he was rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Act. Raja’s story adds robustness to my model and helps illustrate a real-world experience in which a person commits to and experiences advocacy and allyship in a tangible way. Consequently, after explaining each category of my substantive theory, I end by showcasing Raja's story.

Participant Characteristics

I entered my research with the goal to develop a substantive theory on the process of committing to and engaging in advocacy and allyship in college students. I did not set out to find unifying patterns in the type of activism efforts of college students or a pattern in their demographics. My theory addresses questions of why and how college students take part in
advocacy and allyship regardless of the type or quality of their activism. Nonetheless, as a constructivist, I believe it is important to be forthcoming with all relevant information that may shape the reader’s interpretation of my substantive theory. Thus, I present an overview of the advocacy and allyship efforts as well as demographic and characteristic information for each of my participants.

Table 3 presents a brief description of each participant’s advocacy and allyship efforts. I took this information primarily from the prescreening questionnaire and I used participants’ exact words when possible; however, sometimes I made slight modifications for ease of reading. I also added actions that the participant discussed during our interviews but excluded from the prescreening questionnaire. Present tense is used to describe actions the participants were taking during the time our interviews while past tense describes actions they took prior to our interviews. All participants explained how they educated themselves about oppression, which does constitute an action of sorts. Because educating one’s self was so prevalent in each participant’s narrative, I named Educating Self as a category in my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship and did not include it in my descriptive data.

Table 4 presents key demographic information for the participants in this study. Although providing a rich detailed description of the demographic runs the risks of providing identifiable information, I have chosen to include this information in my final manuscript because the concept of identity is central to the advocacy and allyship paradigm. Thus, I present this information using a pseudonym for each participant to reduce the risk that they may be identifiable and I offered participants a chance to select “prefer not to answer” for each demographic category I inquire about.
I gathered demographic information through a prescreening questionnaire. The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) encourages researchers to use more inclusive language when asking about demographics (ACPA, 2013). I followed the ACPA guidelines when designing my prescreening questionnaire, which is found in Appendix D. For ease of reading, in Table 4 I collapsed demographic categories and only used one word to describe each demographic. If a participant selected the open-ended response *Identity Not Listed* and filled in their response, I used the participant’s word choice verbatim.

**Table 3. Participants Advocacy and Allyship.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Advocate Immigrants</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Ally International Human Rights</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td></td>
<td>●self-identifies</td>
<td></td>
<td>●holds leadership position for campus organization dedicated to responsible voluntourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>●leads workshops on responsible international tourism and study abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●attends rallies and protest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>●engages in dialogue</td>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>●engages in conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●president of organization that raises awareness and fundraises to combat sex trafficking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●participates in boycotts intended to remove confederate statue on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●attends and helps organize with #BLM movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with lower SES</td>
<td>• works for an organization that supports individuals from lower SES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>• works for an organization that supports Muslim Refugees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• involved with several pro-Palestine organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented People</td>
<td>• participated in solidarity efforts and signs petitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Atheists</td>
<td>• participates in social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC</td>
<td>• centralizes narratives on POC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• acts based on suggestions from POC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participated in die-ins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ people</td>
<td>• self-identifies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• volunteers at University LGBTQ Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organized Gay Straight Alliances in high schools across the state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• published interview with disability rights advocate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with lower SES</td>
<td>• advocates for living wage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• engages in dialogue about inequality in capitalistic societies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3.** (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Transgender People</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Ngozi People of Color</th>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>People with lower SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• engages in</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• plans and attends</td>
<td>• attends</td>
<td>• tutors and works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dialogue</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>protests</td>
<td>protests</td>
<td>to support and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• attended</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• writes speeches</td>
<td>• engages</td>
<td>raise standards of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>marches and</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>and blog posts</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>education given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demonstrations to</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>them in public</td>
<td>challenging</td>
<td>to youth from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>repeal HB2</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>spaces</td>
<td>discussions</td>
<td>lower SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• engages in</td>
<td>to combat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>challenging</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>discussion to</td>
<td>stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>combat negative</td>
<td>• educates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>stereotypes</td>
<td>others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• engages in</td>
<td>about the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>social media</td>
<td>African</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• engages in</td>
<td>continent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>challenging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>conversations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>• advocates for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>equality in all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>including in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>work and recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td>environments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Paula LGBQA people| • contacted representatives to repeal HB2  
|                   | • engages in dialogue                                                             |
| People with lower SES | • participates in environmental justice work through volunteering, organizing educational workshops and engaging in challenging conversations  
|                   | • worked in rural India, helping kids from lower SES                               |
| People of Color   | • participates in environmental justice work through volunteering, organizing educational workshops and engaging in challenging conversations |
| Transgender People| • contacted representatives to repeal HB2                                        |
| Women             | • participates in environmental justice work through volunteering, organizing educational workshops and engaging in challenging conversations |
| Raja LGBQA people | • participates in protests  
<p>|                   | • active member of the LGBTQ center                                                |
| People with disabilities | • engages in dialogue                                                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Action 1</th>
<th>Action 2</th>
<th>Action 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People of Color</td>
<td>• self identifies (Woman of Color)</td>
<td>• attends and volunteers at protest</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>• volunteer as a tutor for at-risk youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>• self identifies (Woman of Color)</td>
<td>• educate peers against relationship and sexual violence on campus</td>
<td>• works at Women's Center on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td>• organized state-wide protest in response to the rescinding of DACA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender People</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td>• works at LGBTQ center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy People with lower SES</td>
<td>• challenged administrators over practices that disproportionately affected students from lower-class backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBQA people</td>
<td>• volunteers at LGBTQ center on campus</td>
<td>• leads effort to create database of all Gender-Sexuality Alliances in state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish People</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Color</td>
<td>• involved with peer education program at university designed to address macroaggressions on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender People</td>
<td>• volunteers at LGBTQ center on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organized &quot;Safe-to Pee&quot; bathroom map of gender inclusive bathrooms on campus after the passing of HB2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented people</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>• engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>• self identifies with community • volunteers at LGBTQ center on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ people</td>
<td>• works with and teaches children from lower SES backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with lower SES</td>
<td>• worked with international house that supported immigrant families • attends protests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>• participates in social media and voiced support for POC • engages in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeitoun</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self identifies</td>
<td>participates in rallies and protest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involved with campus organizations</td>
<td>helps undocumented immigrants fill out residency permits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>works as a translator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Color</td>
<td>self identifies</td>
<td>started first county-wide high school level organization surrounding sexuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involved with campus organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with lower SES</td>
<td>People with lower SES opportunities for students under the poverty line</td>
<td>campaigns for accessibility areas on campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>works with student groups to create awareness in campus accessibility shortcomings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teaches seminars surrounding gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>self identifies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involved with campus organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Undocumented people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • builds coalitions between marginalized individuals and groups | • participates in program to help undocumented people find housing jobs  
• works as a translator  
• assists in teaching for citizenships |

Table 3 continued. This section outlines the actions taken by Various individuals, highlighting their contributions to the cause of environmental justice and human rights. These actions are laid out in a tabular format, providing a clear overview of their activities.

### Notes

- **a** Charlotte participates in advocacy and allyship surrounding international human rights, which was not included in my original prescreening questionnaire.

- **b** Because Lee stated that her activism was intersectional and she did not want to separate her actions into defined groups, I list her actions as the same for all groups.

- **c** Paula's main interest is in environmental justice. Environmental injustice disproportionally affects people from lower SES, people of color and women. Because Paula did not separate this interconnectedness, I kept the actions the same for all three groups.
## Table 4. Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class Standing</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Economic Class</th>
<th>Immigrant</th>
<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Global Studies and International Justice Genetics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Agnostic, Atheist</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Just spiritual</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LK</td>
<td>Interpersonal Organizational and Rhetorical Communication</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White, American, Jewish</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Spiritual, Non-religious</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngozi</td>
<td>Undeclared, intended Public Health and Nutrition Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Middle-High Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering and English Philosophy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Indian Subcontinent</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Culturally Hindu</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>Agnostic, Atheist</td>
<td>Middle-Upper Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeitoun</td>
<td>Developmental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Middle Eastern, Asian American and Hispanic</td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In keeping with the principle of theoretical sampling and the goal of continuing to search for negative cases until the data is saturated (Charmaz, 2014), I recruited participants in the study who differed in ways that emerged as relevant and meaningful during my data collection. For example, my first few participants came from liberal backgrounds and spoke at length about how their liberal upbringings influenced their participation in advocacy and allyship. Despite the strong influence that a liberal background played in these participants’ advocacy and allyship values, I knew that not all college activists had liberal upbringings. To make my theory more robust, I needed to ensure that some participants came from conservative backgrounds.

In addition to including individuals from liberal and conservative backgrounds, I also interviewed participants who grew up in different parts of the United States and varied in personality traits, their level of engagement with advocacy and allyship prior to entering college, and in their beliefs about working inside and outside of the system to create change. I selected these characteristics because each of these differences appeared to influence the process of advocacy and allyship. Table 5 illustrates these characteristics.

Finally, to help contextualize my study and to gain insight into my participants’ own understanding of their personal advocacy and allyship process, I asked participants in the study to explain their advocacy and allyship efforts as a metaphor. Participants metaphorically related their experience of advocacy and allyship to an onion with many layers, a butterfly coming out of their cocoon, the seasons, a muffin that rises, dandelion seeds that spread, the movie 13 Going on 30, a blooming flower, a photon, and a drop of water in the ocean. The exact answer to these questions can be found in Appendix L. I
encourage the reader to review these metaphors because they strongly illuminate the process of advocacy and allyship from the participants’ perspectives.

Table 5. Participant Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Upbringing</th>
<th>Self-Defined Attributes</th>
<th>Engagement Prior to College</th>
<th>Inside or Outside the System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>slightly conservative</td>
<td>slightly confrontational, over-planner, logical</td>
<td>relatively little</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>military family, spent most time in Southeast</td>
<td>very conservative</td>
<td>vulnerable, introspective</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>both, moving toward outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Southeast, rural</td>
<td>very conservative</td>
<td>anxious</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>both, moving toward outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LK</td>
<td>Southeast, suburban</td>
<td>very liberal</td>
<td>social-justice oriented</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngozi</td>
<td>Northeast, suburban with international stints</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>slightly confrontational</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>Southeast, rural with international stints</td>
<td>very liberal</td>
<td>focused</td>
<td>relatively high</td>
<td>inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja</td>
<td>Southeast, suburb</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>organized, logical</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Southeast, suburb</td>
<td>slightly conservative</td>
<td>rebellious, critical</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Southeast, suburb</td>
<td>slightly conservative</td>
<td>very positive and optimistic</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeitoun</td>
<td>Northeast, city then Southeast, rural</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>stands out, approachable, listener</td>
<td>relatively high</td>
<td>both, more inside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ Understanding of Advocacy and Allyship

Before presenting my substantive model, I want to acknowledge the challenges of language particularly as it relates to my key terms of advocacy and allyship. As a constructivist grounded theorist, I believe it is important to recognize how my participants make meaning of important terms in my study. One of the more interesting and unexpected findings in my study is the disconnect between some participants’ understanding of the terms activist and ally and how I choose to use them. I believe it is important to be forthcoming with the challenges of language and honor how the participants of this study internally defined my most common terms.

Specifically, some participants had a hard time using the term activist to describe themselves. Other participants did not fully resonate with the term ally, especially as a noun to describe a person who acts via the verb allyship to dismantle oppression affecting marginalized groups for which they do not share membership. Finally, I had challenges with the appropriateness and my ability to create a clean structure of advocacy and allyship because of the intersectionality of identities. Initially, I tried to create a dichotomous structure between advocacy and allyship; however, intersectional and solidarity movements make this structure messy and at points ill-fitting. I explain each of these disconnects below and pull from research conducted in my second literature review to explain the challenges with these terms. I conclude with an explanation of why I still choose to use activist, advocacy, ally and allyship in the same way I defined them in Chapter One, despite their imperfections.
Activist

I use activist to name a person who acts to change the status quo and works to dismantle oppression. This is consistent with how other scholars who have studied college student activism use the term (e.g., Block, Haan & Smith, 1969; Broadhurst, 2014; Rhoads, 1998; Sutherland, 1981). As previously discussed, I did not analyze the quality of activists’ efforts for the purposes of this study. If potential participants felt that their actions challenged oppressive structures related to at least one of their marginalized identities and one marginalized identity for which they do not share membership and it was easy for me to understand the relation, I included them in the study. The actions of my participants aligned with common actions associated with activism such as protesting; demonstrating; boycotting; challenging problematic thoughts and language of peers, family, and friends; taking part in the democratic process; organizing; educating self; actively participating in social media; and visually and vocally calling for an end to oppressive structures that marginalized communities face.

Despite these actions, three out of ten participants hesitated to call themselves activists. LK bluntly articulated why adopting the identity of an activist is hard for her:

I feel like an asshole when I say I'm an activist, too, because I don't want to put myself on a pedestal. I know it's what I am because other people refer to me as this thing. I'm not Audre Lorde. I'm not these incredible human rights activists who are on the main stage. I feel weird assuming that. But yes, it's what other people call me, so I guess that's what I am.

Additionally, Charlotte and Ngozi also had difficulty using the word activist to describe themselves. For example, when I first met Charlotte, she was nervous that she may not be
the activist I was looking for. Based on her responses in her prescreening questionnaire, I asked her if she participated in protests, wrote her legislators, and partook in various other forms of activism. Charlotte responded:

I would say I participated in all of the protests on campus, and I've wrote to senators, I've done all of those things, but I've not organized any of that …. I'm doing the boycott [until the Confederate statue is removed from campus]. I'm doing those things but I don't think I'm leading them or charging them or something. I'm participating but it's kind of easy to participate when something's already laid out for you as a framework that you can work within.

For Charlotte, organizing is an important precursor to adopting the term *activist*.

Similarly, when I asked Ngozi to build off her questionnaire and tell me about her advocacy and allyship, Ngozi responded, “It's weird because I wouldn't say that I walk around calling myself an activist, but I would just say I care a lot about certain things.” Later in our interview, Ngozi shared:

I think in my mind an activist quote, unquote would be someone who dedicates—I guess I do that. I don't know. I don't know why. I feel like in my mind, activists are like, MLK or like Malcolm X or just people who—Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela. Like people who—I'm just one human. I don't really think it should have to take a special title.

Not all my participants rejected or commented on the term activists and many of them easily resonated with the general way I use the term. However, the comments of LK, Charlotte, and Ngozi provide evidence that for some people, *activist* is a loaded term that some people reject despite their high involvement in traditionally defined activism work.
I still use the term and refer to my participants as activists because their actions align with my broad inclusion criteria of activism and because a reasonable person would label their participation in these actions as activism. Nonetheless, I think it is important to draw attention to the fact many college student activists in 2017 wrestle with the question: *Am I doing enough to consider myself an activist?* Bloggers and the activist community prolifically share opinions about what is required of people who call themselves activists (Deboer, 2017; May, 2017). The abundance of opinions and relative accessibility to these opinions due to the growth in social media, may be contributing to my participants’ hesitation with the term activist. In the same vein, people within the activist community have been giving the term *ally* a lot of attention recently.

**Ally**

The term *ally* has come under scrutiny by some in the activist community. Mia McKenzie (2013), founder of the website *Black Girl Dangerous* writes:

I’m kinda over the term ally. Between Tim Wise’s recent but not new bullshit, a recent visit to a college where some so-called allies don’t even understand basic racism 101, and the constant cookie-seeking of people who just can’t do the right thing unless they are sure they’re gonna get some kind of credit for it, I’m done. Allyship is not supposed to look like this, folks. It’s not supposed to be about you. It’s not supposed to be about your feelings. It’s not supposed to be a way of glorifying yourself at the expense of the folks you claim to be an ally to. It’s not supposed to be a *performance*.

Activists such as Hari Ziyad (2015), Chanel Dubofsky (2014), and Silvia Carrus (2017) illustrate how the term *ally* is often used by individuals with privilege as a pass to avoid
doing the real work needed to dismantle oppression. Some of the participants in this study related to these critiques and viewed allies negatively. Others placed allyship and advocacy on a continuum with allyship representing easier work and advocacy representing harder work.

For example, when I asked LK her definitions of advocacy and allyship, she reverted to using the nouns activist and ally:

I see so many self-proclaimed allies just kind [of] talking the talk but not walking the walk. Not participating in allyship, yeah. So, if you’re asking for my definition, I think an ally is someone who doesn't actively partake in overt racism. Someone who doesn't actively partake in homophobia or ableism. Someone who would not consciously discriminate against people who are different from them. I think an advocate is where the actual action comes in to play. I guess in the scholarly definition, ally is defined as someone who does take that action. But, I just don't think wearing a paperclip or a safety pin [counts as being an ally]. I just feel like that's more signaling of allyship than actually doing concrete things that an advocate would do.

LK’s response highlights the negative connotation the term ally has gained in many activist circles, especially outside of the university setting.

When speaking about her own experience, Paula often used the term ally to describe less time-consuming actions and the term advocate to describe more time-consuming experiences. Early in the first interview, when asked about her advocacy and allyship efforts, Paula exclaimed:
Because I have chosen to focus on one [environmental justice] in my opinion of an activist, I haven't given full time to be an activist as much for other fields. I definitely feel like I'm an ally. Like when HB2 and that stuff was going on, I was making calls, I would attend meetings and attend those things. But you wouldn't find me protesting as much.

Paula identifies as bisexual and as previously discussed HB2 discriminated against the entire LGBTQ community. Certainly most people would argue that making calls and attending meetings are forms of advocacy; however, Paula equates ally with supporting efforts and advocate with leading efforts and does not associate these terms with identity.

I acknowledge that the language of advocacy and allyship is imperfect because of the connotations, both negative and positive, that people associate with these terms. However, I am still choosing to use the term advocacy to describe participation in activism efforts that directly relate to dismantling oppression linked to one’s own marginalized identities. I am also still choosing allyship to describe participation in activism efforts directly related to dismantling oppression linked to marginalized identities for which a person does not share because of the implicit emphasis I place on the concept of action for both terms. I recognize the term allyship is less known and is used by both my participants and in academic literature. To overcome this language obstacle, I tried to be forthcoming with my definition of allyship. I also highlighted the importance of action in my substantive model of advocacy and allyship by identifying Doing the Right Something as the core category in my model.

Intersectionality

The last language challenge I faced concerns the neat categories of advocacy and allyship that I attempted to construct. I tried to create a structure that accounts for the fact
that college students increasingly hold both marginalized and privileged identities by challenging the notion that privilege is an *all or nothing* reality. In doing so, I identified the distinct classification of advocacy and allyship. However, this dualistic framework is also misleading as identities overlap, mingle, and intertwine, especially in anti-oppression activism work.

As I note in Chapter One and Two, most ally models by default assume only a single identity of privileged. I entered this work with the notion that I wanted to understand the processes that college students go through when they act to fight oppression on behalf of their own marginalized identities *and* act to fight oppression as an ally for other groups. Thus, I set up a dualistic framework of advocacy and allyship as separate concepts that overlap.

However, as I began the interview process, it became even clearer to me that advocacy and allyship are not distinctly separate. College student activists who hold both marginalized and privilege identities do not always take part in in advocacy *or* allyship, alternating between each of them. Often their actions map to *both* advocacy *and* allyship.

For example, Lee is white and is a survivor of domestic violence. Much of Lee’s activism work concerns reducing and eventually eradicating interpersonal and domestic violence. Through telling the story of her Black friend who is also a survivor, Lee recognizes that interpersonal and domestic violence disproportionately affect people of color and that there is an element of racism that runs deep in anti-domestic violence work. When Lee is acting to reduce violence, is she participating in advocacy based on her female identity, allyship based on her white identity, or both? In responding to the question, “Are the barriers marginalized groups face similar or dissimilar?”, Lee responded:
They're similar because they're all going to have challenges and disadvantages and the people who are marginalized can find common ground and support each other, but the differences is everything. They intersect a lot of times.

In Crenshaw’s (1991) pivotal study on intersectionality, she argues that Black women cannot separate their female identity from their Black identity. Similarly, in activism work it is impossible to neatly compartmentalize privileged and marginalized identities. Charlotte is a white immigrant from South Africa. When I asked why she is an activist, Charlotte responded:

Because I’m a white South African, which means that I come from a lot of privilege, especially in South Africa and then moving into the States. And [I’m] from a middle-class family. I feel like there’s a sense of ... I don't want to say duty because that leads into the white savior kind of thing, which I really try to avoid, but not recognizing voices of the oppressed is not being a just human.

Charlotte is an activist for the immigrant community, which I initially categorized as advocacy because she identifies with this community. However, as demonstrated in the quote above, she holds privilege within this marginalized community. Simply put, my neat compartmentalized categories quickly became messy when hearing my participants’ stories. Nonetheless, all my participants took at least one action that easily maps to more advocacy or allyship as I describe these terms in Chapter One. Furthermore, many of my participants shared that these actions felt different from one another. Therefore, I want to balance recognizing the intersectional and complex nature of advocacy and allyship work while not diminishing the differences between them or reducing all activism work as essentially the same. To achieve this balancing act, I want to reiterate the importance in the concept of both,
and. My model on advocacy and allyship does not represent two parallel paths, one for advocacy and one for allyship that sometimes intersect. Rather, I present an advocacy and allyship model that captures how students commit to and participate in actions to dismantle oppression that relates to both their privilege and marginalized identities.

Charmaz (2014) describes the foundational assumptions of constructivist grounded theory as follows: "assumes multiple realities assumes mutual construction of data through interaction; assumes research constructs categories; views representation of data as problematic, relativistic, situational and partial and; assumes the observer’s values, priorities, positions, and actions affect views" (p. 237). I present my challenges with language as an acknowledgment to these foundations and to be forthcoming with my personal subjectivity that is inherent in my model. As a researcher, I recognize the importance and the power I hold in articulating my findings. However, because words hold multiple meanings, I believe it is my responsibility to demonstrate the choices I make as the researcher, as I did in this brief explanation of challenges with the common terms in my study. I will continue to be forthcoming with these choices as I present my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship. I now turn my attention toward a very brief discussion of terms that define the structure of my theory.

**Overview Grounded Theory Terms in Relation to My Model**

I entered this research with the goal of producing a substantive theory to answer the research question: How do undergraduate college students with one or more marginalized identities commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship? A substantive theory is a theoretical interpretation of a process in a particular area that garners practical utility (Charmaz, 2014). My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship in the broadest sense
refers to how students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship. I developed substantive model of advocacy and allyship to act as a visual representation of this process. I use the following terms when describing my substantive model: core category, category, property, dimension, consequence, condition, and influencing factors.

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship contains one core category and six additional categories. The difference between the core category and the six additional categories is that the core category relates to all other categories and has the largest explanatory power in the process of advocacy and allyship. Both the core category and the six additional categories have similarities within them, labeled as properties, and differences within them, labeled as dimensions. Beyond naming and explaining the core category and categories in the process of advocacy and allyship, my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship also accounts for the relations between categories. The relationship between categories can be mutually facilitated, meaning that they occur concurrently, or a category can be a condition for or a consequence of another category. Finally, my theory explains how the process of advocacy and allyship is influenced by two factors, the sociopolitical climate and identity. These factors are not central to the process of advocacy and allyship, but rather impact the process. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between these terms as it pertains to my theory.

**Influencing factors.** *Influencing factors* contextualize the environment in which a college student commits to and engages in advocacy and allyship. I generated my influencing factors through descriptive analysis, rather than generating through a process-oriented analysis as I did when developing categories. The influencing factors do just as the
term implies: they influence each category in my model as well as the overall process of advocacy and allyship.

Figure 2. Grounded Theory Terms.
In my model, I identify sociopolitical climate and identity as influencing factors. While there are certainly many factors that may influence advocacy and allyship, the prevalence of sociopolitical climate and identity in the stories of my participants is so strong that I believe they are important enough to include the model. However, these factors do not describe a process like the other categories in my theory. When an idea or concept describes a process, I label it as a core category or as a category.

Core category. A core category “is central, it relates to as many other categories and their properties as possible, and it accounts for a large portion of the variation in a pattern behavior” (Holton, 2007, p. 280). Doing the Right Something emerges as the core category of my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship. As a frame of reference, I eventually coded over five hundred quotes from my twenty interviews under the category Doing the Right Something. I coded three hundred quotes or less for each of my other categories.
I use the words *doing something* because it is an *in vivo* code, meaning that every participant used this precise language to describe their advocacy and allyship process. *Doing something* signifies the importance of action in contrast to inaction. I place the word *right* in between *doing something* for two reasons. First, I use the word *right* to showcase that college student activists resolve to act because they believe it is morally and ethically *right* to do so. Second, I use the word *right* to underscore how activists choose which specific, or *right*, actions to take to fight oppression effectively and appropriately. The exact actions differ from activist to activist and the quality or effectiveness of the action is not the central focus of this study; however, all activists do something that they self-define as the right thing to do, both ethically and effectively. Unlike any other category in my model, *Doing the Right Something* connects to all other categories in my model of advocacy and allyship. I describe this relationship later in the chapter.

**Categories.** Categories “explicate ideas, events, or processes in the data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 189). In addition to the core category, I identify six additional categories: *Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected, and Experiencing Affirmation.* Categories represent the largest abstracted ideas that I identified through analyzing my interviews and observational data. I use uppercase and italicize when referencing my categories.

For each category, including my core category, I identify both properties and dimensions. Properties are essential characteristics of the category that I generated from the data. When identifying properties, I found evidence of each property in all ten of my participants. Dimensions are attributes in each category that differ from participant to participant but are still universally linked to that category. For example, in my core category
of *Doing the Right Something*, the idea of action is a property while the type of action activists take is a dimension. Every participant acts while they are *Doing the Right Something*, but the exact action differs from participant to participant.

**Relationships between categories.** Because I have generated a substantive process model, the relationship between each category is extremely important. To explain the relationship of categories, I use the terms condition and consequence. A condition describes how a category arises and changes. When a category precedes another category, the first category is the condition of the latter. A consequence describes what happens as a result of a category. When a category follows another category, the latter category is a consequence of the first category. Both conditions and consequences illustrate the idea of movement in the process of advocacy and allyship. In my model, the movement from a condition to a consequence is one directional. Sometimes movement between categories happens concurrently and neither category necessarily precedes the other. I label this type of relationship as mutually facilitated.

My model also includes the idea of a growth-oriented consequence. One of the challenges I faced when creating my model was figuring out how to capture the idea that the process of advocacy and allyship is not just continual but also an evolving process. In other words, there is an element of growth in one’s advocacy and allyship. I felt that only including consequences and conditions by visually placing arrows between categories underscored the importance of continual movement within advocacy and allyship but fell short of emphasizing the growth and evolution in this process.

Thus, I include a concept of a *growth-oriented consequence*, which occurs between the categories of *Doing the Right Something* or *Educating Self*, and the first category in my
model: *Becoming Aware*. I explain this relationship later in the chapter. Now that I have shared my participants’ characteristics, described the challenges of language, and defined the terms of my model, I focus the remainder of this chapter on presenting my model of advocacy and allyship in undergraduate college students.

**Substantive Theory on Advocacy and Allyship**

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship relies on constructivist grounded theory methodologies, interview data, observation data, participant feedback, and the practitioner checks detailed in Chapter Three. My goal was to create a model broad enough to account for variance in undergraduate college students’ advocacy and allyship processes and specific enough to provide utility for student affairs professionals and university faculty who support college student activists. After visually presenting my model, I explain the influencing factors, the core category, categories, the properties and dimensions of each category, and the relationship between each category.

Charmaz (2014) explains that researchers must write clearly and linearly when articulating their findings, “yet experience is neither necessarily linear, nor always conveniently demarcated with clear boundaries” (p. 317). To strike a balance between clarity while not being redundant, I am choosing to explain specific relationships between categories in the order that the relationship in question first appears in my manuscript. Once I explain the relationship I do not again provide an in-depth analysis in another part of the chapter; however, I do briefly remind the reader of this relationship and refer to the pages that I first described this relationship in greater detail.

For example, I identify the relationship between *Doing the Right Something* and *Experiencing Affirmation* as mutually facilitated, meaning that both categories are conditions
and consequences of one another. I first discuss this relationship when I describe the idea of *Doing the Right Something* and remind the reader of this relationship when describing the idea of *Experiencing Affirmation*. Figure 3 illustrates my substantive model of advocacy and allyship in undergraduate college students and Table 6 provides definitions for key concepts in my model.

**Figure 3:** Advocacy and Allyship in College Students.
Table 6. Definitions of Key Concepts in my Model of Advocacy and Allyship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical Climate</td>
<td>An influencing factor that describes the social and political atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>An influencing factor that describes an activist's social identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing the Right Something</td>
<td>The core category of my model which describes how a person takes action to end oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming Aware</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person is first introduced to oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating Self</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person intentionally seeks out information to gain a greater understanding of issues related to oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person examines and develops their beliefs about appropriate and effective advocacy and allyship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Connected</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person develops a sense of belonging within an activist community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing Affirmation</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person receives verification that their efforts are worthwhile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating Different Viewpoints</td>
<td>A category in my model which describes how a person chooses to act when encountering people who believe differently than they do about issues of oppression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Figure 3, my substantive theory identified two influencing factors: 

**Sociopolitical Climate** and **Identity.** **Doing the Right Something** is the core category of advocacy and allyship. My substantive theory is composited of six additional categories: 

**Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, Feeling Connected, Experiencing Affirmation** and **Navigating Different Viewpoints.** What follows is a detailed explanation of the influencing factors, the core category, the six additional categories, and the relationship between these categories.
Influencing Factors

The influencing factors in my model are the sociopolitical climate, which encompasses the political and social environment that surrounds activists as they engage in advocacy and allyship, and identity, which encompasses the identity development for each participant. There is an atmospheric reality to advocacy and allyship in which both the sociopolitical climate and individual identity are always present but also are constantly changing forms. Accordingly, I use wind to visually represent these influencing factors to illustrate their fluidity.

Sociopolitical climate. The sociopolitical climate influences what student activists protest and how they go about doing it. Advocacy and allyship connect to larger movements in the state, country, and world. All participants in this study participated in advocacy and allyship related to movements outside of their university such as participating in the Women’s March, Defend DACA demonstrations, die-ins related to police brutality against people of color, toppling of Confederate statues, HB2 protests, or activism efforts globally. Furthermore, political and social climates influence the relevancy of issues for student activist.

One of the largest influencing political factors for the participants in this study is the election of Donald Trump to the presidency. As explored in both the introduction of this paper and in Chapter Three, Trump’s election fueled demonstrations all around the country and continues to do so as I write this manuscript. Although Trump’s election ignited national protests, it is extremely important to remember that movements such as Black Lives Matter, #Defend DACA, #NoDaPL (No Dakota Access Pipeline) existed before Trump’s election. Nonetheless, Trump’s election was a catalyst to what many are calling the Year of Resistance
Participants in this study mentioned the election in several different contexts throughout our interviews. Table 6 illustrates just a few examples of when participants mentioned Trump and the context in which they mention him.

Table 7. Quotes about the Trump Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>I remember one of my friends last year after the election, we talked about how so many issues that matter to you are getting impacted or being discussed right now. And if you choose one issue, then you can actually make a good difference, make a real change. But if you try to do all of your issues, or keep switching it up, you're not going to make a real change, which is what you want to do</td>
<td>Asked to explain why she focuses on the issue of environmental justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>This was when Trump was just starting to talk about running or something. I can't remember it really well, but the guys behind me were Republicans, and they were talking about how great Trump was, and that was just like ... I was traumatized the whole semester and hated it</td>
<td>Asked to elaborate on how she challenges peers who hold oppressive beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LK</td>
<td>I think definitely Trump's uprising was something that really fanned my flames to really keep going strong with it</td>
<td>Ask to explain why she is an activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja</td>
<td>I guess the reason why I continue is because I still see the problems. Specifically, with this past election, I still see that there's so much happening in the world, so much that's not right with the world</td>
<td>Asked to explain what motivates her to continue the fight against injustice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other significant sociopolitical factors that my participants specifically named include Black Lives Matter, #Defend DACA, North Carolina’s House Bill 2 (HB2), marriage equality, the Shooting of Mike Brown, the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, #MeToo [a national
movement to bring awareness to the prevalence of sexual assault and misconduct],
#NoDAPL, the Syrian refugee crisis, and the importance of Palestinian State.

It is reasonable to believe that in another point in time, these movements will evolve, change, or disappear. Despite the fluid nature of political and social climates, sociopolitical factors influence advocacy and allyship because they shape what issues college students are exposed to and what forms of oppression they are fighting against. Thus, I felt that it was important to include sociopolitical climate in the model while also accounting for the flexible and changing nature of this factor.

*Raja's story.* Raja and her friend Kayla [pseudonym] organized a #Defend DACA rally after the Trump administration announced that they were rescinding DACA. During the rally, I shadowed Raja and when appropriate I asked her how she was feeling about the events that were unfolding. I then interviewed her after the rally. As discussed in Chapter 3, I initially did not know how I was going to incorporate observational data in my study or if I was even going to be able to obtain it. However, because I was fortunate enough to be provided the opportunity to observe Raja in her advocacy and allyship efforts, I am to incorporate her experience in a way that adds richness to my explanation of components in my model. Consequently, after explaining each component of my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship, I include a brief analysis of Raja's organizing efforts to help illustrate salient concepts in the theory. Because this is the first time I am explaining aspects of Raja's story in relation to my theory, I briefly discuss the setting of the #Defend DACA rally and then proceed to explain how the sociopolitical climate influenced Raja and her decision to participate in advocacy and allyship.
The #Defend DACA rally took place in the state capital and was attended by roughly two hundred and fifty people (Stradling, 2017). The rally started 12:00 p.m. on a Saturday and lasted until 3:30 p.m. I began to shadow Raja from 7:00 a.m. as she, her co-organizer and around twenty-five volunteers prepared for the rally. Raja and Kayla created a program guide for the rally which they placed on both Facebook and handed out in person. From this guide, the stated mission of the rally was:

- to provide a strong and poignant voice for DREAMers and all those affected by Trump's proposed repeal of DACA. [Name omitted] is a city of diversity acceptance and love. We will not stand for hatred or bigotry especially in [city name omitted]. As a city, let us unite as a diverse, nonpartisan, peaceful group, to show that [city name omitted] is a city for all.

The stated goals were:

- To give voice to DREAMers and the immigrant community.
- To provide resources for DREAMers and those who want to help, and to connect people with organizations that are fighting for DREAMers.
- To have a peaceful show of love, devoid of profane, crude, and hurtful language or actions. We want to celebrate love, not endorse anger or hate.
- To showcase and celebrate the diversity and acceptance that [city name omitted] is prided for every day.

The rally started with a mile march through the city and ended with eleven speakers, eight of which identified as DREAMers. At the end of the march, leaders from various organizations handed out resources detailing how to contact legislatures and explaining what to do if Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) comes to your house. Protesters carried signs
with statements such as: *No Human is Illegal; Joven Latina Y Educada* (I am young, Latina, and Educated); *Not my President; I Stand with DREAMers; Education not Deportation; Yo NO Creoen Fronteras* (I do not believe in borders); and *Here to Stay.* Below is a list of the most common chants heard throughout the rally, which were often chanted in both English and Spanish.

- No justice, No peace, No racist police!
- No ICE, No KKK, No racist USA!
- Everywhere we go; People want to know; Who we are; So, we tell them; We are the DREAMers, the mighty mighty DREAMers; Fighting for justice; And our families.
- Tell me what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like!
- Hands too small, Can't build a wall!
- The people united, will never be divided!

Overall the mood throughout the rally was peaceful, healing and unifying.

From the onset, Raja’s decision to organize was influenced by sociopolitical climate. Raja was very forthcoming about how she did not know much about DACA or DREAMers prior to Trump’s announcement. Therefore, the political action by the Trump administration to rescind the program coupled with the national and social response served as the catalyst for Raja to take action. In the follow up interview after the #Defend DACA rally, I asked Raja to walk me through her decision to organize the rally. She responded:

Obviously when President Trump announced that he was going to repeal DACA, I wasn't happy about it. And so, what happened is that Kayla started to look for local marches to participate in to defend DACA because there was a large one in
California, in Los Angeles and there were large ones in other big cities, so we were looking for one in [city named omitted].

When Raja and Kayla did not find a planned march in their area, they decided to organize one. In explaining her reasoning for organizing the rally, Raja explicitly mentions the political action of the Trump administration to rescind DACA. Had this political action not occurred, it is reasonable to assume that Raja would not have organized a rally to support DACA recipients.

The announcement of the political action of the Trump administration to rescind DACA and the national response, both in support of and against this decision, served as a turning point for Raja’s advocacy and allyship specifically pertaining to immigration. However, DREAMERs, DACA recipients, and their families faced discrimination and systemic oppression before Trump announced that he was rescinding DACA. For example, DACA recipients pay taxes but are ineligible to vote (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2018). In this instance, the announcement to rescind DACA influenced Raja's advocacy and allyship because it made her aware awareness to oppression that DACA recipients and their relatives face.

Identity. Similar to the sociopolitical climate, identity also influences a commitment to and participation in advocacy and allyship. I entered this research believing that identity would play a significant role in my substantive model. However, throughout the research process, I realized that my participants’ consciousness between their personal identities and their advocacy and allyship varied significantly and was still developing. Additionally, because I intentionally used broad inclusion criteria for this study, the identities significantly differ for each participant and I could not reach abstraction without reducing and
oversimplifying the ways multiple, intersecting marginalized and privileged identities interplay with advocacy and allyship. Nonetheless, my data suggests that identity influences college students’ commitment to and participation in advocacy and allyship in two significant ways.

First, identity often dictates the terms in which participants become exposed to oppression. Many of my participants experienced prejudicial, discriminatory, and/or oppressive treatment due to their marginalized identity well before they had the words to describe their experience. For example, Jacob went through the experience of conversion therapy, which is the practice of trying to convert someone who is gay to being straight by using negative images of same-sex relationships; electronic shock therapy; and spiritual intervention, which demonizes same-sex relationships. When speaking about his queer identity, Jacob shared:

I feel like I've repressed a lot also from high school because I went through the conversion therapy experience. So, there's a lot of spotty memories for that year. … I was of course like sneaking on to Google, and [searching] what is gay? What are gay people like, and things like that. ... I snuck out to go to Pride at one point ... and I had little relationships with guys along the way as well to sort of explore my identity, but this was all secretive, hush hush so that I felt like bad in a way. [It] sort of contributed to my internalized homophobia in terms of like I'm doing a bad thing, I'm disobeying my parents by going around and exploring my identity and experimenting with people.

Jacob’s identity as a gay man directly influenced his exposure to oppression. Because of his parents’ reaction to his gay identity, Jacob experienced the oppressive structure of conversion
therapy and internalized homophobia. It is reasonable to assume that had Jacob identified as a heterosexual he would not have experienced queer oppression through conversion therapy and internalized homophobia. Similarly, Zeitoun, who is Muslim and was two years old at the time of 9/11, spoke about becoming aware of injustice and oppression toward the Muslim community:

I grew up in Manhattan and I was there during 9/11 and I know exactly what happened to my family, I know what happened to individuals in my community. Everything's confidential. There's things that happened behind the scenes that nobody [knows]. It's not released to the public. People don't disappear off the face of the planet for no reason. It just causes a fear. The fact that nobody knows about the realities of our existence makes it even more frightening.

The way in which both Jacob's and Zeitoun became exposed to oppression directly relates to their marginalized identities. This holds true for many of my participants, although not all of them. Conversely, some my participants became aware of oppression and identity because of their privileged identities. Scott, who is a white male and from a middle-class background, explained how he became aware of oppression that children of color who are in poverty face:

I think the first time [I became aware of injustice] probably can be traced back to my parents, because they both worked in schools [that had] a higher Black student population, Hispanic student population, etc. I guess I think one of the first times [I became aware of oppression] was probably when I was really young and I was just helping my mom set up her class, or take down some stuff towards the end of the year. I would see some of the students that she would have to bring in towards the end of the day and help them work out the problems that they had. .... Even though I
was just sitting in the back, I mean I heard the conversations and stuff going towards
not even about the test grade and how they studied, but like, the fact that they didn't
really have a home to go to, to study at, or something. They didn't have access to get
to school early enough to get that breakfast or something. Stuff like that, seeing
interactions between my parents and I guess the kids at their schools, that was
probably the first time [I became aware of oppression].

Finally, as I discussed earlier in the chapter, the ideas of privileged and marginalized
identities are often not clearly distinct from one another. The messiness of identity also
influences exposure to injustice and oppressive structures. For example, LK explained:

I've always known that I was white because I've always been treated as the default,
but to add some nuance into that I've also since middle school have been made aware
of my Jewish identity in negative ways. People would make Holocaust jokes about
me and make fun of my nose and my hair being all fluffy. So, yeah, I'm white, but
there's also a ladder within whiteness itself. So, I consider myself a white Jewish
person. I'm aware that my white skin gives me so many privileges in this world, but I
also am aware that anti-Semitism is a real thing, and something that makes me
extremely uncomfortable and sad.

The second way identity influences advocacy and allyship is the mere fact that college
student activists are going through their own identity development processes as they are
simultaneously committing to and taking part in advocacy and allyship. Raja explained how
she began to become involved in activism at the same time she was becoming aware of her
own identities:
I guess it [activism] started in high school because in high school I started to become super cognizant of my identities. I always knew I was Indian but in middle school I started to be like, ‘Oh no, I don't like being Indian.’ I was trying to hide it a little bit. Then by the time my junior year hit in my high school I was like, ‘You know, this is too tiring.’

Sandy shared how his coming out process corresponds with his commitment to social justice:

I think what made [me] turn towards social justice was probably my parents’ response to my identity as a gay man. They, especially at first, were not very receptive or supportive. … I was just able to channel my frustration with authority and all of that into something that was more personal to me. Because people at that point were getting personal with me when they were, I guess, shooting me down for who I was. … Here I am, I'm like, I've developed a lot as an individual. At least in high school I felt like I was more mature than a lot of my peers and I had dealt with this challenge relatively successfully and became my own person. … I think with all that being said, and the challenge with my identity, by junior year of high school it just made sense for me to want to help other people.

Raja and Sandy’s story illustrate how identity development concurrently occurs with commitment to and participation in advocacy and allyship. In their stories, their participation in advocacy and allyship provided space for them to explore and affirm their own identities.

**Raja's story.** Just like how Raja's Indian identity influenced her entry into activism, it also influenced her commitment to organizing the #Defend DACA rally. Raja is the daughter of Indian immigrants. As of 2017, only .4% of DACA recipients are from India. The majority of the 689,800 DACA recipients come from Mexico (79.4%), El Salvador
(3.7%), Guatemala (2.6%), and Honduras (2.3%) (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2017). Nonetheless, Raja’s identity as a child of an immigrant influenced her decision to organize the #Defend DACA rally. In our first interview, prior to Raja’s decision to organize the #Defend DACA rally, Raja explained that in high school she started to really try and understand her parents’ experiences as immigrants:

I actually started to get close to my family and my mom would tell me about how much shit she had to go through when she came here to America. It was like people would just completely brush her off because she was an Indian woman who was fresh off the boat and didn't really know what was going on. My mom when she was pregnant with me, no one told her about maternity leave.

Raja’s story about her mom signifies her connection to all immigrants in this country. Raja’s connection to DACA evolved at least in part because of her identity as the daughter of an immigrant. When explaining about why she organized the event, Raja clarified:

I didn't know any of them [DACA recipients] personally. But, being an immigrant as well, it was very easy to just be like, ‘This should not be happening.’ Especially if you think about it's basically saying, these kids are going to be deported for living here for 18-plus years. And, they're just going to be sent out. And, they're Americans through and through. They're just not citizens.

Toward the end of the interview, I asked Raja what was next in her advocacy and allyship with the immigrant community. Raja stated:

I think I'm hoping to expand it more to just immigrants' rights in general. Because, my mom is really interested in setting up mental health resources for immigrants. Because, I know my mom was an immigrant. And, my dad had mental health issues
when he first came to America. It's really hard. One, being an immigrant who doesn't really know anyone, [and two,] doesn't really know the resources.

Although, Raja does not explicitly say she organized the #Defend DACA rally because she is a child of an immigrant, the above statements provide evidence that at least part of Raja’s involvement is motivated by her identity as a child of Indian immigrants. Raja’s mom, dad, and grandparents attended and supported Raja behind the scenes at the #Defend DACA rally.

I have a very vivid and powerful memory of Raja along with her grandmother, who was dressed in a sari, chanting, “When immigrants are under attack, what do we do? STAND UP, FIGHT BACK!”.

Now that I have explained the influencing factors in my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship, I progress to explaining the core category of advocacy and allyship, the additional categories, and the relationship between them.

**Core Category: Doing the Right Something**

*Doing the Right Something* is the core category of my substantive model of advocacy and allyship. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that the researcher can either embed their core category inside their substantive theory or identify their core category as a centralized process that describes the theory as a whole. Holton (2007) explained that a “core variable can be any kind of theoretical code: a process, a typology, a continuum, a range, dimension, condition, consequence and so forth. Its primary function is to integrate the theory and render it dense and saturated” (p. 279).

I chose to embed *Doing the Right Something* in my model due to its relevancy to facilitating movement throughout the entire advocacy and allyship process. *Doing the Right Something* directly relates to all other categories, accounts for the greatest variation in the data, and explains the social behavior of advocacy and allyship. *Doing the Right Something*
is a dynamic and evolving process by which a person acts in such a way that they consider to be the most morally and effectively right way to fight oppression.

As previously mentioned, Doing the Right Something is related to the six additional categories in the model. It is a consequence of Becoming Aware and mutually facilitated with Feeling Connected, Educating Self, Experiencing Affirmation, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, and Navigating Different Viewpoints. Properties of Doing the Right Something include taking action, linking action to the meaning of being a compassionate person, and congruency. Dimensions of Doing the Right Something include differences in the type of action taken, the source of values activists draw upon when forming the belief that action is morally required, and the specific skills each participant uses when trying to partake in effective activism. I reconfigure my advocacy and allyship model in Figure 4 to illustrate the relationship between Doing the Right Something and all other categories in my model. Figure 5 provides a brief outline of the properties and dimensions of Doing the Right Something.

Properties. Action is the first property of Doing the Right Something and is so central to the experience of advocacy and allyship that every single one of my participants used the language of doing something to describe their advocacy and allyship. For the participants in this study, action captures the idea of doing something, which is juxtaposed to the idea of not doing anything to fight oppression.
Figure 4. Doing the Right Something.

Figure 5. Properties and Dimensions of Doing the Right Something.
The pervasiveness of these exact words led me to eventually identify *Doing the Right Something* as my core category. To illustrate just how pervasive these words are in their narratives, I am including an example from every participant when they used the word *doing something*.

In my first interview Lee explained how she became an ally for the queer community after watching the TV show Glee:

> [After that episode in Glee] I joined what was called a Straight and Gay Alliance. … and that was the first thing that I did I think [where I] started to actually *do something*, and so I guess that was my first bit of activism.

When asked to explain why she is involved with the Women’s and LGBTQ center on campus Raja responded:

> [It] gives me *something to do* rather than just saying like, ‘I care.’ When you say you care about something, people are going to be asked, ‘Well what are you *doing* about it?’ This time I actually have an answer.

Paula responds similarly when I asked her what motivates her activism:

> I guess what motivates me [to participate in environmental justice] is hearing that it is actually *doing something*.

After leaving an abusive relationship, LK shared why she chose to form a gender equity club in high school:

> Because I felt like I needed to *do something*. And I looked around and I realized that a good handful, a good portion of my friends have also been in abusive relationships. Especially during teenage-hood. And I said, ‘While I'm still a teenager I should *do something* tangible about this and give other folks who might be in the same situation
a place where they can put their true thoughts out there and their true visions out there.

Zeitoun shared how she began to find her voice and power as an activist by connecting groups of students:

When I talk to the individuals who work at these different places, that's when the dialogue began. That's when I was like, ‘Okay, I can do something about it.’ My involvement with each of these centers, and some more than others, is to make sure that each of these students is actually getting the real information.

Ngozi began to be involved in activist works abroad while living in her parents’ home town in Ghana. While there, Ngozi explained that she developed a commitment to social justice from her interactions with a community center:

And kind of like if this group was hurting, like we hurt with them and we're gonna do something. Like very much involved in the community, very much doing ... And just being very involved in the community and caring about the community. I feel like that's probably where I got that [commitment to social justice].

While in the previous examples participants used the word doing something in reference to a specific and tangible action, Jacob and Scott spoke more broadly of the importance of doing something. Jacob shares how he simply cannot remain silent in the face of injustice:

I think for me, the action is important, because I feel like I can't just not do anything. Showing up whenever possible in whatever way I can, whether it be making sure that conversation counts, whether that means bringing hard conversations up with friends, or that means actually showing up to a rally. I think the little things that I do will hopefully make a difference.
Scott explained to me that in his view any action is better than inaction when it comes to fighting oppression:

Anybody who is showing interest through *doing something* is better than the people that aren’t. As long as you're trying, you're attempting, and then there's like, intent and love and actual personal opinions or care or something behind that intent. You actually want to *do something* to make a change. You see these problems in the world, and you feel like you should fix it more than just if it's convenient for you to go to this march with your friends or something like that. You actually want to see change happen and you're kind of on the road to *doing something*.

Sandy mentioned doing something when he shared his reasoning for taking action:

To me it just makes sense. … I learned this recently the categorical imperative by Kant. He said something along the lines of if you can *do something, you should do something*. ... It's like if you are aware of something, like of an injustice happening, *and you have the ability to do something about it, then you should*.

Finally, when trying to articulate her activism journey metaphor, Charlotte quickly spoke to the importance of action:

You start with one thing, and you feel like you're *doing something*, and there's ... Onion's probably not the right metaphor but you pull something away and 10 other things pop up. You're like, ‘Oh there's just so much more.’ Then you've got to keep working at things, and there's just a lot there.

Charlotte’s onion metaphor speaks to the fact that *Doing the Right Something* is a continuous and evolving process. This simple metaphor captures the complex reality that “there’s just so much more” to keep working on and moving towards when going through the process of
advocacy and allyship. Thus, as shown by the relationship between *Doing the Right Something* and the other categories, activists continually revisit the process of *Doing the Right Something*.

Closely coupled with the property of action is the second property of *Doing the Right Something*, which is the idea that activists associate action with being a compassionate person. The property of being a compassionate person captures how activists make meaning of their choice to act because they associate this choice with the morality of being a compassionate person. I want to be clear that I am not judging action or inaction in terms of *good or bad* but rather I am articulating the narrative of my participants and how they frame the idea of action compared to inaction in the dualistic terms of good and bad. By including the property of being a compassionate person, I am highlighting the importance college student activists place on the idea of morality in their choice to take action to fight oppression. For example, when I asked Sandy why he participates in advocacy and allyship, he responded:

> If there's action that can be taken, I'm doing a moral wrong if I don't. You know what I mean? It's like if you become aware of something and you don't do something about it. Then you're doing a moral wrong. If you can do something, you should do something.

Zeitoun, Charlotte, and Ngozi attributed their faith toward their understanding of *Doing the Right Something* as a moral choice. Zeitoun related how her Muslim faith calls on her to be a good person and act in a way that she perceives is socially just:

> I am a good person because I am told to be a good person from whatever things have been brought up culturally and religiously. I know that when a lot people think about
the Islamic faith, they don't necessarily think of the person I am today. Just because of what society, or American society specifically, pushes to the public. At the end of the day, there are very few scriptures that are going to tell somebody not to be a good person. I think probably my faith is one of my most defining reasons about why I do what I do.

Zeitoun spends a lot of her time and energy fighting oppression and when Zeitoun uses the phrase “why I do what I do,” she is speaking toward Doing the Right Something and fighting oppression.

Similarly, Ngozi, Charlotte, and Paula associated their faith with their choice to fight oppression and to their interpretation of what it means to be a good Christian. Ngozi explained her outrage over Trump’s Muslim Ban which she protested:

Yeah, I mean I'd even say it's because I'm [Christian]. Like I don't know. There definitely are Christians who'd be like, "Oh no. They're Muslims," so they shouldn't care. That's just stupid. It was just so unjust, it was just like—you can't just tell certain people that they're not people.

In our second interview Ngozi expanded on her Christian faith as a reason to Do the Right Something:

I think the Bible makes it pretty clear how to respond to these kinds of things and what groups should look like and things like that. And I think the Bible talks about inclusion and justice.

For Charlotte, her faith does not necessarily motivate her to Do the Right Something, but it helps her understand why she is compelled to Do the Right Something:
I cared about general issues that go with social justice, but I didn't really know why or how to combat it, or live out that way. I think a lot of that is not necessarily, like how you try to work against social injustices, is not necessarily linked to my faith. That's just learning more and learning different ways so that I do that well, and constantly being in that process of how to do that well. I don't think is necessarily directly linked to faith, but I think the reason why I found that I feel that way, I associate with my faith. I think I didn't have an answer for why I felt my heart breaking for people until I found faith.

Although not as strongly religious as Ngozi and Charlotte, Paula identified with her Catholic upbringing and associated this background with why she helps, or takes action, to improve the lives of others:

Because we're Catholic, so a big thing in Catholicism is volunteering, giving back, ignoring the other things about Catholicism, but the volunteering and giving back was really instilled into me—so I guess to me it's very much like Catholicism is about caring about others, not about hating other people, and that's what you're supposed to be doing every day.

Faith is only one avenue where activists develop the belief that to be a good person, you must do the right thing and fight oppression. At other points, it appears that activists have unexamined intrinsic motivations to be good people. When I asked Scott why he is an advocate in the queer community, he responded, “I just always found myself—I'm trying to think—it was just what I thought was the right thing to do. Like, it just made sense to me.”
Lee shared a similar sentiment with Sandy. Lee shared how she feels like in the broadest terms she must act when she sees other people suffering and speaks about empathizing with other people’s struggles:

I think also with my own suffering, I know what it feels like to suffer, in whatever way, and I don't want other people to suffer in whatever way they suffer, like if it's the same as me, or different, I just can't stand people suffering. And I just can't not do something.

Scott talked about his desire to be his best self through capitalizing on all the resources at a university:

Ever since coming to college and having all the resources that [my university] has for different groups and activism and stuff, I've completely filled all my time with whatever I can do with that because I'm at college, I have all these resources. Why not build upon that and try to be the best person I can be?

Family values also play a role in shaping activists' understanding of morality. For example, Raja explained that she is an activist because of her family values:

My family is based on the values—I don't know if it's activist values—but just the idea that all human beings are deserving of a good, happy life, basically. I grew up with that belief. Then activism had a positive connotation in my head. I've also grown up with this idea that I am here as a public servant to the world. A lot of it has to do with how I was raised by my family. My family didn't raise me to be an activist, my family actually never even talked about politics when I was young at all. Because of the values I was raised with, it led [me] into activism.
Later in the interview, Raja returned to the idea of what is morally right and morally wrong when talking about where she learned to be an activist:

Sometimes those definitions [of good and bad] can get super bogged down with all the little details, but if you come from the bare bones of what's good and what's bad, for me bad is hurting another intentionally and hurting yourself intentionally, or not taking care of someone. All of that. Then good is doing something good for the world and giving without expecting in return. It's like those golden rules that I feel like most people have in their hearts, but it can get lost with all the little stuff in-between.

Raja’s and her fellow activists’ stories illustrate that when it comes to advocacy and allyship, activists are trying to do what any good, as they define it, person would do.

The last property of Doing the Right Something is congruency, or acting in such a way to produce intended results. Another way to think about congruency is experimenting with advocacy and allyship by matching one’s skills to actions. Activists work toward aligning their knowledge, skills, values and personal traits to their actions. Lee provided a good example of how her knowledge base correlates to the actions she takes:

Most of my things [actions] are focused—it needs to be better, like my going to the streets needs to be more broad—but, most of that is on race and gender issues, are the things that I know the most about, and the things that I feel the most comfortable going to… Those are the things that when I go to protests, it's about race or gender stuff, or both.

Sandy also provided a good illustration of matching his skill set to his activism work. Sandy identifies as a numbers guy and his activist efforts have included collecting data to help
further a cause, such as compiling a map of all gender-inclusive restrooms on a college campus or a list of all queer alliances in high schools across the state. Sandy explained:

It's more so that I enjoy working with data and I'm applying it to something that I'm interested in. It's not so much that I'm—because I'm not opposed to, like, I'll do presentations. I'll have conversations and all of that—but when I find the things that I like to work with more, I've always been more of a numbers and data and computers kind of guy. I was like, what's one way that I can do this in a way that's helping other people.

When trying to match skills, knowledge, and values to the activism work, activists begin to understand what types of action do not work for them as well. Lee spoke toward understanding herself and why a certain form of activism, in this case participating in social media, does not work for her:

I've learned through my own experiences—for me at least—being a social media activist doesn't work for me because I'm not gonna be constructive. I get angry and then I delete people and block people. So that doesn't work for me. But I know it works for other people. …I know that it can work, but I guess I just try to do what—I try things out and if it doesn't work out for me, then I do something else. … And I don't think one kind of activism works more than another. I just think that there's things that are gonna work for me and things that are gonna work for other people.

LK described a similar experience in which she learned that working from outside the system, opposed to inside the system, aligns more with her values and skills:

I don't think creating change from inside the system might be for me. I will try to work with the system when they are throwing us a bone. I will take those
opportunities when I see it, otherwise I think there needs to be both a push from the inside and outside, and I do better from the outside I think. It feels better in my heart. I don't want to get sucked in and end up becoming a part of the game. People ask me like, ‘Oh, you're so well-spoken, so passionate. Why don't you become a politician?’ I'm just like, ‘I could, but then I might lose myself in it. I might lose the authenticity.’ So, I just feel more authentic doing grassroots-type work.

The rest of my participants also provided examples of matching skill, knowledge, and personality to their activism work. Ngozi believes she excels in creating dialogue, so most of her activism work centers around talking to people who believe differently than she does. Zeitoun identifies herself as a connector and so her activism work centers around student government and trying to build coalitions across marginalized groups. Several participants commented on how they hope to match their future careers to activism work. All of these examples point to the idea of congruency. With so many options to choose from when it comes to breaking down oppression, college student activists eventually match their efforts to their skill sets, personality traits, values, and knowledge base.

**Dimensions.** The dimensions of *Doing the Right Something* include: specific actions activist partake in; the source of values from which an activist draws upon to be a good person; and the specific skills, knowledge, and personality traits for each activist. I previously illustrated the variety of actions participant take in Table 3. Although it is certainly worth exploring the effectiveness of actions and what draws people to partake in specific types of activism, I want to reiterate that this study is not about judging the effectiveness, appropriateness, and morality of my participants’ actions. In this research, my
aim is to uncover the process of a college student’s commitment to and then participation in *Doing the Right Something* as they personally define it.

The first dimension of *Doing the Right Something* is the source of values from which an activist draws upon to be a good person. This includes the different avenues from which activists gain their values and how they interpret these values to conclude that participating in advocacy and allyship is simply part of being a compassionate human. When I explained the property of *being a compassionate person*, I explained the different sources activists drew upon to conclude that taking part in advocacy and allyship is part of being a compassionate human being. Charlotte, Ngozi, Paula, and Zeitoun draw upon their faith and their religious upbringing; Raja draws upon her family values; and Sandy draws upon his training in philosophy. In addition to faith, family values, and philosophy, surviving trauma can act as a source from which activists draw upon to define how to be a good person. Lee explained that her advocacy and allyship are avenues that help give her life purpose:

> I feel like it [advocacy and allyship] is my purpose. If I'm not doing that, I feel like my life is pointless. And I have a lot of depression and stuff, and I've been through a lot of stuff, like with my family and with my IBS, and also I have an eating disorder, and so I guess it's kind of—what is it—I wouldn't say it's a coping mechanism, or like a part of my recovery, because I'm not better, at anything, but it's what keeps me going and what makes me want to be alive.

Although the source from which an activist draws upon may differ, all activists define *Doing the Right Something* as part of being a compassionate person.

The last dimension of *Doing the Right Something* is the different skills, knowledge and personality traits when taking part in advocacy and allyship. Table 5 (see p.127) details
the different attributes and skills of each participant. I did not find any evidence that a specific attribute should be valued over another attribute when committing to and engaging in advocacy and allyship. After the Charlottesville rally and counter protest, Felicia Fitzpatrick, activist and host of the podcast *Call and Response*, stated, “If we all have the same goal, why not use our skills and passions to create our own specific type activism?” (Fitzpatrick, n.d.). My findings support Fitzpatrick’s belief that there is room for all skills and passion in collective anti-oppression work.

**Relationships.** As I previously mentioned, my model on advocacy and allyship not only identifies categories related to the process of advocacy and allyship, but also explains the relationship between each category. These relationships between categories are defined as consequential, conditional, or mutually facilitated. A condition signifies how a category arises, while a consequence signifies what happens because of a category. When categories occur simultaneously or it is not necessary for one category to occur before the other, then the relationship is labeled mutually facilitated.

*Doing the Right Something* is the process activists continue to circle back to throughout their advocacy and allyship. Consequently, all other categories relate to *Doing the Right Something*. In explaining the relationship of *Doing the Right Something* to the six additional categories, I recognize that I have not yet discussed in great detail these other categories. To help the reader understand the relationship of *Doing the Right Something* to other categories, I encourage the reader to reference Table 6 which provides a definition for each influencing factor and category. I also offer brief explanation of the connected category before explaining the relationship. I encourage the reader to review the full specific category
explanation found later in the chapter and then return to my explanation of the conditions and consequences should they need more clarification about each category.

**Consequence of becoming aware.** Doing the Right Something is a consequence of Becoming Aware. Becoming Aware represents the process in which an activist becomes conscious of a facet of oppression, ranging from subtle acts of bias to systemic oppression and genocide. In my model, I define Becoming Aware as the first step in advocacy and allyship. Doing the Right Something is a consequence of Becoming Aware because once an activist becomes aware, they often decide to act.

I offer Zeitoun as an example of this relationship. Zeitoun first became aware of oppression through prejudicial treatment she faced because of her Muslim faith. Zeitoun explained that because of this treatment, she began to deliberately participate in advocacy by educating her peers about her faith:

There were a group of peers and someone was reading a book about the end of the world and everyone went around in a circle, they were like, ‘what happened if the end of the world occurred’ and all these students were like, ‘I'd get on a plane and I'd fly away, or I'd get on a spaceship, etc.’ and when it was my turn to say something, somebody filled in what I was going to say, and they were just like ‘oh she's just going to a temple and pray.’ And I was like ‘first of all, that wasn't my faith at all.’ That was a misunderstanding to begin with. And then it was offensive, because that's obviously not what I would do. And in that moment I was like—things like that, it would make me angry. It was situations like that. I wasn't so mad at the person, but it was like, why does this keep happening? Why is this something I keep experiencing? I think part of it is faith, because I think in being put down because of
my faith and because of my background I first had to figure out why it might have been, like are these things people are saying, are these true? Are these real about my faith that I don't even know about? And in that education I learned things that, first of all, whatever they were saying was usually false more than anything else. And I also learned what values my faith taught me. And then when I had the opportunity to meet other people from different backgrounds, there's something going on here as a bigger picture, I started applying those values from my faith into teaching people about the bigger picture.

In this example, after experiencing discrimination, Zeitoun is motivated to participate in advocacy through challenging the Islamophobic beliefs of her peers and educate them on the "bigger picture."

While Doing the Right Something is a consequence of Becoming Aware, the rest of the categories in my model have a mutually facilitated relationship with Doing the Right Something. When categories are mutually related, categories do not necessarily precede each other and participants may experience both categories at the same time. The experiences in each mutually related category are both conditions of and consequences for one another. In addition to being a consequence of Becoming Aware, Doing the Right Something is mutually facilitated with the remaining five categories: Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected, and Experiencing Affirmation.

Mutually facilitated with educating self. Educating Self represents intentionally seeking out information to learn about oppression and effective ways to fight it. Educating Self and Doing the Right Something are mutually facilitated because actively and
intentionally *Educating Self* is a form of, leads to and is a consequence of *Doing the Right Something*.

Taking action through *Doing the Right Something* leads activists to the idea they need to learn more. For example, Jacob participated in a peer diversity education program at his university in order to make the campus more inclusive. While leading workshops and participating in the program, Jacob came to the conclusion that he had “been babbling a lot and didn’t know a lot.” Jacob then proceeded to educate himself more specifically about intersectional activism through processing with friends and researching the complexities of systemic oppression.

Conversely, *Educating Self* leads activists to engage in the process of *Doing the Right Something*. In the quote below, LK explained why she is an activist:

Because I see oppression as overlapping systems. What is the quote? Like, 'If one of us isn't free, then none of us are free.' I believe in that deeply. I see so many different forms of supremacy as overlapping, especially male supremacy and white supremacy. And I can't see any reason why I would just go and fight for my own people and not others. I might as well have an all-encompassing approach to activism because all oppression is intertwined and interlinked.

In this explanation, LK’s “seeing” of overlapping systems and her ability to name these systems is a result of her intentional effort to educate herself through taking sociology classes, attending workshops, listening to speakers, processing with friends, and reading on her own.

*Mutually facilitated with exploring beliefs about advocacy and allyship.* Exploring *Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* represents how activists foster ideas about effective
advocacy and allyship, define what actions constitute activism, and begin to explore how advocacy and allyship are different from one another. *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is both a condition to and consequence of *Doing the Right Something*. Jacob’s experience serves as a good example of this mutually facilitated relationship.

When Jacob entered college, he made it his goal to do as much as he could to advocate for the queer community. Through his advocacy, he began to reflect on if he was just adopting a rebellious personality or if he was truly taking actions in the hopes of dismantling oppression in all its forms. Thus, the action of participating in advocacy for the queer community led Jacob toward the reflective process of *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*. While taking part in Pride, Jacob noticed a counter protest by queer activists who were upset with how the Human Rights Campaign, one of the most nationally recognized LGBTQ advocacy groups, neglects to fight for the most marginalized individuals in the queer community. When reflecting on this experience, Jacob explained:

I'm becoming more of a radical, in that I think the more I become aware of different power structures at play, the harder it is to be a centrist activist, in terms of—not like a Hillary versus Bernie, but a Hillary versus Marxist revolution. I'm more towards the Marxist revolution. I think the more that I learn about intersectional issues and especially about capitalism and the way that capitalism functions to enforce all these different societal structures, the more I learn, the more radical leaning I tend to go.

In this example, Jacob’s *Exploring Beliefs about the Marxist revolution*, is directly related to his experience at Pride and his encounter with counter protesters. Conversely, his new *Exploring Beliefs about the importance of more revolutionary activism*, lead Jacob to actually participate in more radical activist efforts.
LK also shared a similar experience to Jacob in that she developed more radical beliefs about advocacy and allyship after attending protests associated with the Black Lives Matter movement:

I went out to a lot of Black Lives Matter rallies in [city name omitted], and I was just exposed to raw, not only activism but raw emotion that needs to be vented. And that's when I realized, 'Oh, it's not just white ladies like me getting abused by their partners, but there's also injustice entrenched not just in my relationships but in social systems, and in systems of governing.' And so everything just kind of started clicking at that point. And I saw how male supremacy and white supremacy were very linked and going hand in hand…. Just being out in the streets of [city name omitted], people were filled with righteous fury for lack of a better term, and I saw people angry, I saw people crying, and these were the same emotions that I felt just being with my abuser, but just kind of locked up in there. And that's when I kind of learned that anger and conflict aren't this terrible thing that needs to be avoided. Fury, anger, conflict, all those things can actually be super transformative and push for social, political change. So that discovery was pretty big for me when I saw that being angry, being furious at the way things are, at the way we have been treated is not a bad thing. And I think that's where there's a lot of disconnect between folks like myself who are activists, and folks who might identify as non-activists, centrists. I think that in our society people have really been raised to think that conflict and anger are to be avoided at all costs, and that we should just dance around the big issues, avoid stepping on toes when yeah, we might step on toes in our activism to call attention to big issues, but
we're calling attention to people actually being murdered as opposed to toes being stepped on.

When *Doing the Right Something* through attending Black Lives Matter demonstrations, LK simultaneously developed beliefs about what she calls activists and centrists, about the importance of experiencing and expressing raw emotion when fighting for change, and identifies interlocking systems of oppression while participating in activist efforts.

**Mutually facilitated with navigating different viewpoints.** *Navigating Different Viewpoints* represents the process in which activists encounter different, opposing, and often oppressive ideologies and choose what to do when encountering this difference. *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* because when *Doing the Right Something*, a college student inevitably encounters situations where they must *Navigate Different Viewpoints*. In addition, *Navigating Different Viewpoints* through choosing to confront oppressive viewpoints is a form of advocacy and allyship.

For example, after organizing a disruptive protest at a Trump rally, LK received negative emails from her peers, both liberal and conservative, who believed she was infringing on free speech. LK believed through her actions she was disrupting oppressive structures that Trump stands for. Some of her peers believed by not allowing Trump to get a word in, she was limiting free speech, which is a form of oppression. Ultimately, LK had to navigate and figure out what to do with these different viewpoints. Purposely, she had lunch with pro-Trump supporters to both try and understand their point of view and to confront what she believed to be their oppressive ideologies.

In another example, Ngozi explains how her roommate confronted her after Ngozi took part in a die-in on campus. Ngozi’s roommate did not understand why people of color
and their allies went through such drastic measures to get their point across. Once Ngozi’s roommate confronted her, Ngozi had to navigate her course of action in dealing with a different and prejudicial viewpoint. When I asked Ngozi what she did, she responded:

I just explain[ed] to her why [I participated]. Stuff like how it's not just like we're angry at police officers. Like what the actual facts are and how that impacts people and stuff like that. And then she was just like, ‘Oh, that just never happens,’ because she just hadn't had the opportunity to hear that, which just also blew my mind because I'm not really used to that. But she just had never really heard from a perspective of a Black person about what it is like to see a whole bunch of people shot for no reason other than they're Black. And so just having a conversation like that, just informative conversations and stuff like that. They were challenging for me just because I'm really not used to people not understanding to a certain extent.

Ngozi’s experience with her roommate is a consequence of Ngozi’s choice to participate in the die-in and her choice to respond. Conversely in Ngozi’s choice to navigate the different viewpoint of her roommate by educating her exemplifies taking action through advocacy.

*Mutually facilitated with feeling connected.* Feeling Connected represents the ways in which activists connect with to other humans such as close partners, friends, and mentors. *Doing the Right Something* is mutually facilitated with Feeling Connected because through acting, activists feel connected and, in turn, connection encourages action. It is truly hard to separate these processes from one another. For example, Lee attended a protest where activists toppled a city Confederate statue. When asked how she got involved with this protest, she explained:
I have a lot of activist friends, and luckily, they keep me in the loop about when things are happening and stuff. And so one of my activist friends or acquaintances sent that to me on Facebook, the Facebook invite, … I didn't even know they were going to take the statue down, and I've never protested with this person.

In this example, Lee’s connection to the activist community both allowed her to be informed of a protest that was organized and executed quickly as well as made her feel a sense of belonging with an acquaintance. This connection in some way influenced her decision to attend the protest. After this protest, Lee shared with me that she felt more connected to both the cause of Black Lives Matter and to other people in the area who are actively protesting racism.

Paula offered a good example of just how important *Feeling Connected* is to *Doing the Right Something*. I asked Paula what advices she has for college students taking part in activism for the first time. She responded:

I think find a good network of people. A really important thing is going to events. If you want to do something, find people who have similar interests, like joining organizations, joining clubs, getting mentors like faculty and adults who are on your side.

*Mutually facilitate with experiencing affirmation.* *Experiencing Affirmation* represents the ways in which activists experience external affirmation through accomplishing what they set out to do, receiving recognition, praise, or encouragement and/or experience internal affirmation through faith and personal morals. *Experiencing Affirmation* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* because activists often experience a form of affirmation while taking action (external or internal) and affirmation also influences activists
to action. For example, in our first interview, I asked Sandy to share with me a meaningful experience that he has had in activism efforts. Sandy shared an example where he won an award because his advocacy efforts:

   In my first year, I got the Chancellor's Creating Community Award. That was really cool because that completely blindsided me. The program coordinator of the LGBTQ Center, they nominated me for it. And then I think that was how I was invited to participate in DEPTH [a peer grassroots diversity program]. I think that, winning that, really changed my trajectory. Not in a dramatic way, but really made certain things happen that couldn't have happened otherwise. It was just cool. … I had never gotten that appreciation in my life before.

Sandy is now in his third year of college and continues to increase his commit to advocacy and allyship. Sandy credited the experience of gaining affirmation, both in the form of an award and in the form of appreciation from mentors and peers, to further his commitment to Doing the Right Something.

   Raja's story. Raja’s organization of the #Defend DACA rally encompasses the first property of Doing the Right Something, which is action. The second property of Doing the Right Something is deciding that advocacy and allyship is the morally correct course of action to be a good human. During our first interview, Raja explained that her family taught her to “care for human beings.” Raja then goes on to explain that for her, “good is doing good for other people. So, if I want to be good I should be doing good for other people.” When addressing the crowd at the rally, Raja explained that everyone regardless of their immigration status should care about DACA because it is the humane and just thing to do. Raja’s address to the crowd and her insistence that we all must act to be good humans offers
evidence that Raja’s resolve to be a good human includes taking action to fight oppressive structures.

The last property of *Doing the Right Something* is identifying which specific actions to take. Raja explained that:

[The] big reason me and Kayla planned the March was because we felt that DACA was a really big issue that was affecting a lot of North Carolinians and there wasn't a centralized voice for that and there wasn't a centralized movement. Because, obviously, there are large populations of DREAMers in North Carolina, but no one knows about it. So, a lot of citizens are like, DACA doesn't affect North Carolina. It affects Texas. It affects California. But, I'm like, ‘There's so many DREAMers who are your neighbors who live right down the street.’ And so, a large part of the march was just giving a voice to DREAMers in North Carolina, giving them a really powerful presence. So now, it's much harder to ignore people when they're walking through downtown [City Name Ommitted] versus if they're just not as visible.

In this explanation, Raja rationalized that creating a centralized voice to fight Trump’s rescinding of DACA is the effective course of action.

Raja’s skills, passions, and personal trait supported her ability to organize. On the surface, Raja’s lack of experience in organizing may seem like a mismatch to her advocacy and allyship in organizing the #Defend DACA rally. However, Raja is the recipient of the most prestigious scholarship at her university. It is obvious that she is both conventionally brilliant and that she excels at traditional defined organization skills such as time management. Raja’s co-organizer, Kayla, is also a recipient of the prestigious scholarship at
their university. However, Kayla explained to me during the rally that she is a little more introverted while Raja is more extroverted.

I shadowed Raja during the hours leading up to the rally and I noticed that Kayla carried around a clip board and organized volunteers, while Raja ran around setting up tables, speaking with the press and addressing the crowd. As we were setting up at the ending location for the rally, Raja received a call from Kayla who wanted Raja at the starting place of the rally because the press was there. Raja quickly stopped what she was doing and as we were walking briskly toward the start of the rally, Raja commented that she is an extrovert and does not mind speaking to the media and that Kayla excels at behind the scenes logistics. Now that I have explained in detail the core category of *Doing the Right Something*, I now move to elaborate on the remaining six categories in my theory.

**Becoming Aware**

*Becoming Aware* represents the very first step in advocacy and allyship. *Becoming Aware* awakens activists to injustices, prejudicial treatment, discrimination and/or oppression in unintentional, unexpected, and/or unplanned ways. For example, a student in a high school United States history course covering slavery does not intentionally seek to learn about historic racism. A person bullied because of their faith is not seeking to learn about Islamophobia, nor is a person rejected by their parents because of their sexual orientation looking to learn about homophobia. Even when a person actively seeks to stay informed through reading news stories or scrolling through social media, the knowledge they gain is unintentional to some degree. In other words, through the act of learning about injustices, activists can and do gain knowledge that is unplanned and unforeseen.
*Becoming Aware* brings consciousness to an injustice. After an activist is conscious of injustice, they either move toward *Educating Themselves*, move directly toward *Doing the Right Something*, or do both. Figure 6 details this relationship. The properties of *Becoming Aware* include the concepts that this process as unforeseen and elicits an emotional response from the activists. The dimensions of *Becoming Aware* include the matter in which a person becomes aware, which I labeled as modality; the depth of awareness each activist acquires; and the saliences of marginalized and privilege identities at the time when the activists are *Becoming Aware*. Figure 7 illustrates the properties and dimensions of *Becoming Aware*.

**Properties.** The first property of *Becoming Aware* is the concept that the process is unforeseen. *Becoming Aware* and the knowledge about oppression that the activist gains during this process is unplanned and unknown by them.

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**Figure 6.** Becoming Aware.
Figure 7. Properties and Dimensions of Becoming Aware.

For example, after asking Paula to describe the time she first became aware of oppression, Paula responded:

When I was a little kid, my mom [told] me I was Black. That's not injustice, but that was what I thought of first because that was the first time I realized I was different from the other kids, because I'm from [suburb name omitted], so it's very white or very Asian. I was always with those kind of kids. And then also the representation when I was really, really young wasn't that great. It's not that I thought I was white. I just didn't know I was Black. And so my mom had to tell me and I was like, ‘You're wrong. No.’ I feel like that sort of thing, when a kid has to actually be taught that they are a specific race, that's sort of a weird thing, especially when other people don't have to learn or think about their race till way later. Because I think I was in elementary school. It was very early that I had to sit down and learn about this.

In the conversations with her mom, Paula is becoming aware that the dominant narrative in our country is a white one. Paula did not plan or intentionally seek out conversation with her mom about Blackness and otherness. Nonetheless she became aware of these concepts. While the conversation was more than likely planned by her mom, it was unplanned by
Paula. In another example from Paula, she explained where she first learned about environmental injustices through watching a music video:

I saw this music video and this guy sings about being from a trash city. So, there's trash everywhere, houses are built on top of this trash pile. And he loses his girlfriend 'cause he lives in this trash city, and I asked my mom about it. I was like, ‘Hey, what is all this trash about? Is this a joke? He's just making it up. Cause he was from our original country, Tanzania.' And she's like, ‘No, that's real. That's a real thing.’

In this example, Paula did not search for a video explaining environmental degradation in her home country; she happened across it through watching a music video.

Even in instances where activists may intentionally attend an event to increase their awareness of a certain issues, their awareness increases in unforeseen ways. In the example below, Charlotte explained how she intentionally went to a lecture about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, the lecture exposed her to unforeseen knowledge:

It was an academic lecture. I can't remember the name of the organization but it was just somebody talking about the conflict in general, and I was like, I know nothing about this. I should go and learn about it, because I know it's a hot topic. I went and was just—I knew nothing, really nothing. I had no understanding of the nuance and the complicated nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I think it also spoke to me because the lady who talked about it was South African. She talked about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an apartheid, because technically a lot of political scientists will classify the conflict is as a modern-day apartheid.

In this example, Charlotte attended the lecture to gain knowledge about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, she had no way of knowing that she would learned about the
conflict in the context of an apartheid. Learning about the systematic segregation and oppressive treatment of Palestinians was unforeseen by Charlotte.

In the example below, Ngozi shared how she became aware of the rise in anti-Semitism because of her relationship with one of her best friends:

I think, I feel like it had to do with some Trump reaction. Might have, I don't think he was president at the time, but I'm pretty sure he'd said something and there's just like—some sort of anti-Semitic actions were happening in the United States. I didn't even really hear about it, but she [Ngozi’s friend] did, and she was really upset about it. And I remember in that moment, I was like, whoa this is still happening? I think I was just like, how? Literally millions of people were already killed.

Ngozi admits to not hearing about the rise in anti-Semitism after Trump's candidacy until her friend told her. Her awareness of the issue was unplanned and unforeseen and developed through a discourse with her friend. Ngozi experienced shock when finding out about the rise of anti-Semitism, which leads to the property of Becoming Aware: eliciting an emotional response.

The type of emotional response ranges from sadness, to anger, to confusion. However, all activists relate some sort of emotion to Becoming Aware. Charlotte explained how her heart broke when she attended a lecture in middle school by the CEO of an organization that combats sex trafficking:

I just had never really learned about sex trafficking before, especially as a middle schooler I had no idea what any of that was. He talked about it, and I think that was the first time that I was—like that broke me, that's terrible. How can there be such injustice and such terrible things going on in the world? I think that was the first time
that I was like, you can't just hear about something like that and be complacent, and go back to your ordinary life.

Similarly, Lee experience sadness and frustration when first becoming aware of oppression through writing a paper on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

I got to write that paper, and nobody else got emotional with their presentations, but I got all choked up and emotional, in front of all these kids in high school when I presented about Martin Luther King, Jr., and stuff, and I don't know. … I didn't know a lot of the things that I was learning when I had to do the research myself. And it was only scratching the surface of what I know now, but it was my first time learning some things, and injustices, about race. It was frustrating to me that I didn't know that, and I was the only—maybe I wasn't the only one— but in my mind, I was like, ‘These people in the classroom aren't going to know this.’ It was upsetting to me and then also thinking about what he went through and everything was just getting to me.

Sandy, who is gay, does not express sadness but he explained that he felt confused and angry as he became aware of oppression gay boys face:

In the playground it was the first time feeling like you're ‘other,’ you know what I mean? My parents reinforce that [being othered] by saying, ‘Why [are] you hanging out only with girls?’ My dad took me to this therapist once who guided the conversation to, ‘I hear you're hanging out with girls more than other people.’ I knew what was going on and I was livid at my dad in the car afterwards. I was like, ‘Why would you do that?’ He was like, ‘I was just trying to help you.’ So, [that was the] first time I felt like ‘other,’ but it was reinforced by the people that were around me.
In a final example, Scott shared that he felt shocked and sad when becoming aware of classism through working at an afterschool center:

I remember just being kind of like, shocked. I mean, I was shocked, and kind of sad because this little girl, she doesn't have the same opportunities that I did, and I was like, ‘What are people doing to help this other than just dropping her off at this daycare for the day?’ I mean, of course it's not just a daycare, but it made me more aware.

The unforeseen quality of *Becoming Aware* coupled with the emotional response to this awareness unify this experience among all activists in my study. Nonetheless, there are several differences within these unifying and overarching properties.

**Dimensions.** One difference within *Becoming Aware* is the method in which exposure of oppression takes place, which I label as modality. Modality refers to the method in which the activist is exposed to issues of oppression. Additional dimensions of *Becoming Aware* include the depth of awareness each activist obtains and the saliences of marginalized and privileged identities at the time when the activist is *Becoming Aware*.

One avenue through which activists may become aware of oppression is through experiencing trauma related to their marginalized identity. Previously, I shared Jacob’s story of going through conversion therapy related to his gay identity. This traumatic experience made Jacob aware of oppressive structures gay men face, well before he had the words to describe oppression. Similarly, Lee shared with me her experiences as a survivor of domestic violence and rape:

My dad was abusive, I saw him hitting my stepmom. … He would drag her by her hair, or her breast, and punch her and hit her and slap her and all that stuff and he
would be verbally abusive to me, all the time and [to] my brother. Like when we were growing up, I mean now he's better, but anyways, I never thought he would hit me. And then one day he did. And so that was another thing that made me really care a whole lot about domestic violence stuff. And then I was raped, and that's something that made me care about sexual violence.

I feel honored that Lee felt comfortable enough to share her survivor story with me and I chose to share it in this manuscript because I believe one of the most prevailing ways activists become aware of oppression is through experiencing oppression because of their marginalized identities. Often these experiences occur well before activists have the language to articulate oppression.

Another way in which activists Become Aware is through social media and happenchance interactions. For example, Lee explained how she became aware of oppression that individuals in the queer community face by watching the popular TV show Glee:

This kind of sounds funny to people, but Glee helped me learn a lot about some things. … I was really homophobic, and then I started watching Glee, and that started to switch my mind.

Even though Glee is fictional, by watching the show, Lee became aware of real oppression queer youth face which influenced her transition from identifying as homophobic to being an ally for the queer community.

Another way activists become aware of oppression is through having a close relationship with someone who experiences oppression based on their marginalized identity.
For example, Jacob speaks at length about a friend of his in middle school who exposed him to oppression people with disabilities face:

I still have a friend today [from middle school]. She has spinal muscular atrophy, I think. And so she's in a motorized wheelchair. And so I became best friends with her in middle school, and it was super cool, and I would ride on the back of her wheelchair and be like, ‘What's up guys?’ But from just being with her and hanging out with her, I witnessed a lot of the daily sort of systematic things that she goes through. Like just navigating the world as a person in a wheelchair, with the accessibility, with things that I have never even thought about.

Similarly, LK explained that she was always aware of oppression that the disability community faces because her sister identifies with this community:

[I have been aware of oppression within the disability community] my whole life. My sister has a syndrome that's one in 30,000 people. It's extremely rare. I grew up with—when we'd go out, people would stare at us. We’ve gotten kicked out of movie theaters, restaurants, theme parks, general public spaces. People glare us down and, uh, it makes me mad to talk about. But, yeah, just like my whole life I've been aware of ableism.

LK has been aware of ableism for as long as she can remember because she witnesses the way the world treated her sister. LK became aware of ableism well before she had words to express this awareness.

Finally, activists Become Aware of oppression in an academic setting. I have already explained the way in which Charlotte became aware of oppression related to sex trafficking
and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through attending lectures. Jacob explained how he first became aware of racism in grade school:

I think I was generally aware [of racism] in grade school. Growing up, obviously when we learned about American history there was racism, and bad things happened. And it was very basic and not very in-depth, and I didn't understand at that point.

Jacob alludes to another dimension of *Becoming Aware*, which is the depth of awareness activists acquire when they become aware. In the example above, Jacob explains that he became aware of oppression in grade school, but the depth of this awareness was shallow.

Ngozi explained how her awareness of racism has evolved:

I think the earliest [time I became aware of oppression] would have to be when I lived in Virginia for two years for 6th and 7th grade and I remember, number one, that there just weren't a lot of Black kids around in my school and stuff. So, I remember noting that. I don't know if that was necessarily injustice. I think the time that I was the most aware of actual injustice being a thing still in the United States—my parents also talked about it. My parents complained. I mean they always just talked about how whites mistrust or distrust, and stuff like that. My sister and I were always like, oh no it's fine. This is not a thing, or this is not a thing anymore. Just in our own minds, just because we didn't really have that experience. But when I went to boarding school, so it was 11th grade, I think that was when I first really became aware of the fact that this is a thing. It's like a different thing than it was in the past and yeah, there just is distinct inequality between the way that people of color are treated, like how they're treated.
Ngozi explained in our first interview that 11th grade was a pivotal year for her because that is the year Mike Brown was murdered and the year she explicitly remembers experiencing the racist actions of her classmates. The quote above illustrates how Ngozi first became aware of oppression from being one of the only Black kids in her 6th and 7th grade class and then hearing her parents speak about white mistrust. Finally, Ngozi’s awareness grew again when she directly experienced racism in the 11th grade. Sandy relayed a similar experience in his growth of awareness about racial justice:

I rationally understood that there had been—that there were barriers in systems that stopped people from reaching ‘success.’ When I think of that, I think of race and the school-to-prison pipeline. That I rationally understood in maybe my freshman year of college. So I wasn't aware of that beforehand, but then at the same time, I had known about racism, but hadn't connected the dots that there were systems in place, for example.

Sandy became aware of racial oppression through experiences that he initially was not fully aware of or could articulate. He became more aware after having experiences in college that allowed him to connect the dots from past experiences and name the concept of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The last dimension of Becoming Aware concerns which identity, marginalized or privileged, is most salient for the activists at the time of their awareness. For many of my participants, their first exposure to injustice related to their marginalized identities. LK explained that:

The first time that I truly became aware of injustice existing, being human, being a self-centered human, was when I had injustices performed against me in high school
by an abusive partner. And that's when I became aware of interpersonal violence and, yes, people who you think you love can hurt you. So that was the first time that I became really aware.

LK’s experience of *Becoming Aware* is similar to many of the other activists in this study such as Lee’s experience of becoming aware of sexism through surviving domestic violence; Zeitoun’s experience of becoming aware of Islamophobia through growing up in New York City after 9/11 and being bullied in middle school; Jacob’s experience of becoming aware of homophobia through experiencing conversion therapy; Paula and Ngozi’s experiences of becoming aware of racism through their Black identity development process, and Sandy’s experience of becoming aware of homophobia through his dad taking him to see a therapist because he was only hanging out with girls. In these examples, the *Becoming Aware* process correlates to each activists’ marginalized identities. I all of these instances, *Becoming Aware* is a direct result of personal experiences with oppression.

In other cases, activists become aware of oppression because of their privileged identities. Sandy explained how he became aware of racism through an off-handed comment from his dad:

So I think the first time I was aware of discrimination being a thing was—I was definitely very little. I think I was in elementary school and I don't know how far back to go actually. It was at least elementary school. … My dad one time told me that if I didn't live a good life and was a bad person, he believed in reincarnation. … He said that if I was a bad person and did bad things, morally bad things, that I would be reborn as a Black person in Africa. So, I had this image in my mind of Africa
being this wasteland where people are punished and they lived before as people who
did bad things.

Jacob similarly shared a story where he remembers encountering racism from his privileged
white identity:

I just have this vivid memory from 5th grade. ... And we were talking about the Civil
War, and then a Black girl in the class was not paying attention, and she was—I don't
know, doing something. And then the teacher was like, ‘Your ancestors would die to
have this education.’ And as a 5th grader, I was like, ‘What is happening?’ So I have
this vivid memory of that. And so, I think from there I was like, ‘What?’ I think that
was a little inkling of my tendencies.

Ngozi, who is able-bodied, relayed a story of Becoming Aware of ableism in elementary
school:

I lived in Ghana and I went to school [which had a] really big emphasis on service.
And one of the things we did was—there's a school, it was a home for children who
had mental and physical disabilities. We would go and I remember something we
would do is play soccer with them. Our soccer team would play with theirs and the
soccer ball had a bell inside of it because some of the kids were blind and couldn't see
the ball, but they could hear it. And they were really good. I just remember, and
they'd also train them and kind of teach them how to do other tangible and kind of
vocational things, like basket-weaving and stuff. So yeah, I think that was just
probably the first time, I was aware of the fact that some kids just have lives that are a
lot harder than mine just for reasons that had nothing to do with them.
In each of these experiences, *Becoming Aware* of oppression provided the foundation for activists to explore oppression from a stance of privilege.

**Relationships.** *Becoming Aware* is a condition for and a growth-oriented consequence of both *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*. In detailing how *Doing the Right Something* is a consequence of *Becoming Aware*, I have already illustrated how *Becoming Aware* is a condition for *Doing the Right Something* (see pp. 168-170). After a brief reminder of this relationship, I explain how *Becoming Aware* is a condition of *Educating Self*. I then explain how *Becoming Aware* is not only a condition of both *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*, but it is also a growth-oriented consequence of these categories.

**A brief reminder of previously discussed relationships.** As I explained in my discussion of *Doing the Right Something*, after activists *Becomes Aware* of unjust and oppressive structures, they are often inspired to take immediate action. Consequently, *Becoming Aware* is a condition for *Doing the Right Something*. In the example I provided earlier, after *Becoming Aware* of oppressive stereotypes related to her Muslim identity, Zeitoun chooses *Do the Right Something* by educating her peers about her Islamic faith. In addition to serving as a condition for *Doing the Right Something*, *Becoming Aware* also serves as a condition for *Educating Self*.

**Condition for educating self.** After *Becoming Aware*, activists are not only motivated to act but also, they often intentionally seek out information to clarify aspects of oppression. *Educating Self* embodies the act of intentionally seeking out additional information regarding any aspect of oppression, including how to fight it. Lee provides a
great example of this relationship when she explains how she reacts after *Becoming Aware* of oppression that the immigrant community faces.

Lee explained that after *Becoming Aware* of issues around immigration, she realized she does not know as much as she would like and consequently is seeking out more information:

[Immigration is] something that I don't know as much as I want to know about, but my best friend is a Muslim also, she is an immigrant and she has a lot of issues with that and everything, and also, another one of my best friends that is from Mexico, he also has a whole lot of issues that he's dealing with right now with current stuff. And so, that's something that I'm currently trying to learn more about, like, going to the things that the school offers when I can and learn more about it.

Similarly, Charlotte shared how after becoming aware of issues around sex trafficking she intentionally tried to educate herself about the issue and how to become involved in anti-sex trafficking work, despite the challenges associated with being a minor. Ngozi also shared how she was driven to educate herself more after *Becoming Aware* of a facet of oppression. After attending a workshop put on by the LGBTQ center at her campus and *Becoming Aware* of oppression that transgender people face, Ngozi shared that she:

Google[d] what proper pronouns were and stuff like that. And how to ask a person about their name and pronouns and things like that - Even just like the general differences [within the queer community]. I would say I'm very far behind on that [queer allyship]. Well, that's not true. But I was and so I really did have to educate myself a lot on trans issues.
**Growth-oriented consequence for doing the right something and educating self.** In addition to serving as condition for *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*, *Becoming Aware* is also a growth-oriented consequence of these processes. A growth-oriented consequence moves beyond describing the order of categories because it also describes a deepening in understanding as a direct result of the preceding category. During the act of *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*, activists often develop a deeper awareness of oppression. Because this awareness deepens their consciousness, *Becoming Aware* is also a growth-oriented consequence of *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*.

Lee provided a good example of deepening her awareness after *Doing the Right Something*. After becoming involved in a feminist group on campus because of her advocacy for women, Lee began to realize the intersectional aspects of oppression and the problems with white feminism:

> I learned that [only focusing on women’s issues] was a little problematic and I expanded. So, I don't like to separate the groups now that I am an activist for, because I feel like they're all connected, and that when I try to only pay attention to one thing at a time, I feel like I'm leaving other groups out, and you can't really do that because people hold multiple identities.

Similarly, LK began her advocacy work first by fighting for women’s rights. In this effort, LK met one of her best friends, who was an officer with her in the Students for Gender Equality club. LK’s best friend challenged her to critically think about racism and took her to Black Lives Matter rallies, which furthered her awareness of oppression. LK attributed these rallies as deepening her awareness of not only discriminatory treatment, but also systemic oppression:
But as for oppressor and oppression, [I became more of aware it] probably closer to middle to end of my senior year of high school after I had been through the various BLM rallies that I attended and reading more on just racial justice and racial happenings I think is what opened me up to that new realm of study.

In another example Scott began to participate in advocacy and allyship through his work in the LGBTQ center on campus. Scott explained how his involvement in the center deepened his awareness of different identities within the queer community and different oppressive structures that queer community faces:

Before that [being involved in the LGBTQ Center], I said LGBTQ but I only ever really thought of it as lesbian and gay, and then I was like there are people that may be bisexual, there may be people that are transgender, there may be people that are cisgender. Every single different thing and you can be whatever you want to be. I didn't think about it like that, I didn't think that people were just creating these labels just because they wanted to, but then I experienced them and I talked to them and I had conversations.

_Becoming Aware_ is also a growth-oriented consequence of _Educating Self_. Paula’s environmental justice advocacy and allyship provides a great example of this relationship. After _Becoming Aware_ of the trash issue in Tanzania, Paula both intentionally sought to educate herself about the issue that in return resulted in her gaining a deeper awareness of environmental injustice. Paula explained her reaction after she watched the video:

I was like that's really crazy. You can't really live around trash and be okay. That doesn't really sound like something healthy. So that summer I went back to Tanzania, 'cause my grandparents live there, and I did some research. My research was not
really good, 'cause I had the shittiest supplies to use from school where it's like, ‘What is the soil nutrient level?’ Which doesn't tell you anything about environmental issues. But talking to people is when I realized a lot of people are unaware about things versus people not caring about things.

By going back to Tanzania and to do research and help the community, Paula demonstrates how *Educating Self* is a direct consequence of *Becoming Aware*. Since her time in Tanzania, Paula has spent more time educating herself and participating in environmental justice advocacy and allyship. Consequently, her awareness of the relationship between environmental degradation and systemic oppressive structures of sexism, racism and classism grew significantly. In our first interview, Paula explained why she chose to focus on environmental justice:

> I ended up choosing that environmental justice as the issue I want to focus on. A lot of my activism is there. It's really intersectional though because it does affect people who are lower income, people who are Black and Hispanic, more Native American, as well. And also, climate change disproportionately affects women.

Paula’s growth in awareness of systemic oppression is a direct result of intentionally seeking out to learn more about environmental justice.

**Raja’s story.** In our follow-up interview after the #Defend DACA rally, Raja explained to me how she first became aware about Trump rescinding DACA.

I'm pretty sure it [learning about DACA] was a BBC news update, on my phone or something like that. I just heard and, at first, I didn't really know much about DACA. But, then, I started researching it and was like, ‘Wow, this isn't good. This is not good at all.’ And, obviously, I knew like the basis of the DREAM Act and just realizing
how many people—like I said, I don't know any of them personally. But, being an immigrant as well, it was very easy to just be like, ‘This should not be happening.’ … So, that was very upsetting But, it's kind of like that upset when you're like—, you know, sometimes you get really bad news? Or, not personal bad news but you hear about something horrible that happening. And, you're like, ‘That makes me really upset. And, I'm going to be fired up about it.’

Raja became aware about DACA in an unforeseen way, through a news update on her phone. Raja had an emotional response to learning about DACA. She became upset and then she became “fired up.” After learning about DACA, Raja immediately and intentionally sought out information (*Educating Self*) about DACA and she decides to act by organizing a march (*Doing the Right Something*).

**Educating Self**

*Educating Self* represents intentionally seeking out information about oppression and effective ways to fight it. *Educating Self* occurs through doing personal research and processing with relatives, friends, partners, or mentors. I separate *Educating Self* from *Becoming Aware* by my emphasis on intentionality in the former. The process of *Educating Self* refines an activist’s understanding of oppression and usually results in bringing awareness to the next level. I did not include *Educating Self* on the list of actions my participants take during their advocacy and allyship because *Educating Self* is such a uniformed and prevalent action among all participants that it would be redundant to include it in Table 3. Additionally, it is distinct from other forms of advocacy and allyship covered under the umbrella of *Doing the Right Something* because of the individualistic nature of *Educating Self*. 
Educating Self is a consequence of Becoming Aware and Becoming Aware is a growth-oriented consequence of Educating Self. Educating Self is a condition for Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship. Finally, Educating Self is mutually facilitated with Feeling Connected and Doing the Right Something. The salient and only property of Educating Self is intentionality and the only dimension of Educating Self is the method activists use in their efforts to educate themselves. Figure 8 illustrates how I relate Educating Self to other categories. Figure 9 illustrates the property and dimension of Educating Self.

**Property.** I am choosing to delineate Becoming Aware and Educating Self by underscoring the importance of intentionality in Educating Self. As mentioned previously, a growth-oriented consequence of Educating Self is Becoming Aware. These two processes are closely related; however, Becoming Aware is not planned while Educating Self is. When activists are Becoming Aware, they awake to a facet of oppression that is unforeseen by them. In contrast, the process of Educating Self is a purposeful act to explore this facet. Educating Self represents the desire of an individual to learn more.

For example, after Paula became aware of the “trash city” in Tanzania, she immediately conducted research to learn more about why so much trash exists in Tanzania. In this example, when Paula watched the music video she Became Aware, which prompted her to Educate Herself on the issues. Throughout my conversations with activists, they often shared experiences where they felt like they needed to learn more about oppression and how oppression effects marginalized populations.
Zeitoun explained that when she interacted with people from the queer community and consequently became aware of the issues queer people face, she had a desire to learn more:
When I saw people that I knew identifying with this different group that I wasn't familiar with, that's what triggered my interests in learning a little bit more.

Ngozi shared with me that she intentionally educates herself in order to prepare for challenging conversations. For example, Ngozi explained that after she learned about Trump’s Executive Order 13769, or the so called “Muslim Ban,” she “just remember doing a lot of research…to kind of engage in conversations about it.” Ngozi also shared how she conducted informal research to be prepared for challenging conversations surrounding the removal of Confederate statues:

I remember Googling and equipping myself to have those kinds of conversations and about the difference between what a statue actually does about memorializing things. I remember finding answers to questions like, ‘Oh like we're just erasing our history!’ and stuff like that and just being like, ‘Oh, we have museums and stuff for that.’ And thinking about how it affects other people and it's not really about it being there, it's about the impact. Just kind of preparing myself for those conversations.

Raja provided a good example of the close relationship between *Becoming Aware* and *Educating Self*:

I actually started to read the news, which started to make a huge difference in how I interacted with the world. Being in school, I would see all these people and I'd see all these activism things and, I'd be saying things but I wouldn't understand the actual—like, I would be like, ‘I am a woman, I deserve to be respected’—but I wouldn't actually understand what other women have to go through because they are female. I never had to go through that. When I actually started to read the news and when I actually started to become aware of the world around me and see what other women
have to go through, other people of color, other members of the LGBTQ community, that's when it started to hit me. That's when my true passion for, I call it real activism, started to form.

In this example, Raja equated her *real activism* to the knowledge she gained from watching the news. In our interview, Raja explained that she intentionally consumes news and social media pertaining to activist causes. The knowledge she gains in a brief reading of an article prompts her to read more articles. Both her awareness and education lead her to *real activism*, as she defines it. Lee provided a good example of the importance that *Educating Self* has in the overall process of advocacy and allyship.

In our interview, Lee passionately described how important educating oneself is when doing advocacy and allyship. I asked her to please offer advice for a college student just starting their activist journey. She responded:

Well, you're not alone, and if it's something you care about, don't give up on it, and if you make a mistake, admit it and learn from it. If somebody tells you you're being problematic, try and figure out why you're being—listen to them. Don't just automatically get defensive. Because if you're getting defensive, you can't learn from it, and a big part of all this, I think, is learning. You've got to constantly be learning. You can't stop. You can't think you know it all, ever, and be a good listener.

While intentionality represents a unified property of *Education Self*, the method in which the activist intentionally seeks out information differs.

**Dimensions.** The main dimension of *Educating Self* that I identify concerns the different method in which an activist intentionally seeks out new information. Some activists favor seeking out new information through personal research such as reading books and
consuming social media. Other activists favor seeking out new information by asking friends, family, partners and mentors about their thoughts and experiences around oppression. Still other activists favor attending lectures and workshops in an academic or institutionalized setting.

Charlotte explained how she first went to her parents to try and understand sex trafficking. However, she quickly realized she would have to educate herself through doing personal research on the internet:

I probably talked to my parents about it. I don't necessarily have memory of that, but I probably talked to them about it and they were probably like, ‘Look it up.’ They probably didn't know much more than I did at that point in time. I think then I turned to searching, and I think I searched for organizations or things in my community that I could get involved with. I think for a long time I remember being really frustrated because for the most part, especially with the issue of sex trafficking, unless you have a degree or are over eighteen there's just nothing you can really get involved with, because it's really sensitive issues and you need to be pretty well versed in trauma and things like that in order to deal with any of those kinds of issues. I think a lot of the beginning time of that I was just frustrated because there wasn't much I could really do. I think it was just Googling and trying to find things that I could get involved with.

LK shared that after a friend called her out for her racist belief that white people can experience racism, she had to do a lot of personal work and research to understand her friend’s position:
Between myself and between reading stuff online I think I worked through it on my own and oof… it was a personal journey.

Another avenue activists take to educate themselves is through exploring issues of oppression with family, romantic partners, or close friends. Raja explained that after breaking up with an abusive partner, she began to focus on her identities and specifically her Indian identity by asking her parents questions about the immigration experience. After breaking up with her partner Raja shared the she "started to really talk to my mom and my dad and [asked], ‘What was it like to come here? What was it like to come here not knowing anyone?’

Sandy offered a good example of Educating Self through processing ideas around power, privilege, and oppression with a romantic partner. When I asked Sandy if he had a social justice super hero, he responded:

I would say recently I have. It wasn't in high school, but my boyfriend Matt, he does a lot. He was a double major kind of guy and had a minor in women's and gender studies and is even taking night school. He does everything. He did Teach for America and worked in a middle school in [city name omitted] and now he's in grad school to become a principal. He started a nonprofit in [city name omitted] to educate teachers on issues of social justice, called Schools United [pseudonym]. And he has taught me so much. I would say that he, he I think widened my lens very much.

Before it was LGB and then it was like LGBTQ and then it was like with Matt, everything.

In our second interview, I asked Sandy where he learned about systemic oppression and he quickly responded, “definitely Matt, my boyfriend.”
Another avenue through which activists educate themselves is through developing a close relationship with a group of peers who are also interested in social justice. LK provided a great example of *Educating Herself* through processing with peers:

I would say I learned with the help of my peers who were awakening to the same realities at the same time I was. We all kind of collectively had this feminist awakening in high school, and we just talked and bounced ideas off of each other. We debated each other, which really helped develop my own kind of stances. And then taking those first steps and starting a club and working through that.

Similarly, Zeitoun did research with peers to examine racial and socioeconomic disparities in an effort to bring a social justice club to her high school:

We did some personal research about some health standards and stuff like that, a lot of those things were implemented later on in my high school and then in other high schools. We saw, clearly that everything from drug use to smoking use to alcohol use, it aligned to racial differences and economic differences. I did that research with some other individuals.

In addition to doing personal research and processing with others, activists educate themselves through attending workshops and signing up for classes in the academic setting. Lee explained that when she transferred to a four-year university from a community college, she was excited to learn about social justice through all the resources at the university:

I came to the university and there [were] all these opportunities to learn, and that's what I wanted, because I felt like I didn't know a whole lot, and what I had learned had been from books and from other sources, and not from personal experiences of people. … So, I went to this event at the university, and it was something about
women, and there was a panel of a bunch of different women that identified in
different ways.

Sandy similarly explained how he educated himself through processing with peers.
As a member in a university-sponsored peer diversity program, Sandy was able to learn not
just about oppression but also about how to be an activist:

That taught me a lot. Through that I think I was able to learn more about what it
means to be an activist, and I think the most prominent representation of what's that
looked like nowadays is that I'm more aware of the things that — I notice more things.
You know how you kind of, we used to joke about how we can't watch movies in the
same way after we learn a lot of things?

Student activists also intentionally educate themselves by capitalizing on academic
opportunities. Charlotte, Ngozi, Raja, LK, Lee, and Sandy explicitly mentioned taking a
class in college that pertains to social justice. In these instances, each of them intentionally
signed up for a class to learn more. In these classes, each of them Became Aware in
unforeseen ways; however, their choice to take the class was intentional.

Finally, the last way activists educate themselves is by actually participating in
advocacy and allyship. Charlotte explains that she attended a protest at her university to
remove a Confederate statue because she believed the statue should come down; however, by
doing so she learned more about the statue:

I think going to the protest and being a part of that taught me more than I knew going
into it. I knew where I stood, as far as the statue goes, and then going to the protest
people were organizing explained a lot of the reasons to the extent of how bad [the
confederate statue] is, and I didn't know some of that.
This example blurs the line between both *Educating Self* and *Doing the Right Something*. However, the result for Charlotte is a deepening in awareness about the construction Confederate monuments and historical and current racism.

**Relationships.** *Educating Self* is a condition for *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* and is a consequence of *Becoming Aware*. Additionally, *Educating Self* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* and *Feeling Connected*. I previously explained the relationship between *Educating Self* and *Doing the Right Something* and between *Educating Self* and *Becoming Aware*. After reminding the reader of these relationships, I move to discuss the relationship between *Educating Self* and *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* and between *Educating Self* and *Feeling Connected*.

**A brief reminder of previously discussed relationships.** Earlier in the chapter, I explained how *Educating Self* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* (see pp.170-171) because on the most basic level the act of *Educating Self* is a form of *Doing the Right Something*. Furthermore, after taking anti-oppressive action, activist often become motivated to learn more about oppression and vice-versa. After *Educating Self*, activist often become motivated to *Do the Right Something* and take action to fight oppression.

I have also previously discussed the relationship between Educating Self and Becoming Aware (see pp.192-194). Educating Self is a consequence of *Becoming Aware* because after an activist unintentionally becomes aware of a facet of oppression, activist often actively seek out more information. Additionally, *Becoming Aware* is also a growth-oriented consequence of *Educating Self* because through the intentional act of seeking out more knowledge, activists often grow and deepen their awareness.
Condition for exploring beliefs about advocacy and allyship. When activists Educate Themselves about advocacy and allyship, they begin to form opinions and Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship. In the example below, I asked Raja to explain how she developed her ideas about effective activism. Raja replied:

That was definitely from the internet. Just seeing on the internet ... I mean obviously the internet has so many different places and so many different places that say different things, but specifically Tumblr.

Raja educated herself about activism through intentionally scrolling through Tumblr and reading about activism. In this environment, Raja began to develop ideas about what activism looked like.

LK organized a protest at her high school to protest police brutality. When I asked where she learned about effective and appropriate activism, LK responded:

We wanted to do like a die-in. We didn't think that we would have enough people to really do a walkout. But then a lot of people showed up. Which is a great thing, because we did the die-in right in the commons during lunchtime. We brought drums. We went off the video we brought like loud, like noisemakers. We listened to chants online circulating social media, and we adopted those chants like ‘I can't breathe,’ ‘Black Lives Matter.’ Those general chants. A lot of our—I guess, specific tactics—we learned from media, but we collectively came to an agreement that a die-in would be the best for raising awareness about these issues.

In this example, LK developed her beliefs about what activism should look like from both educating herself on tactics she found in the internet and bouncing ideas off her peers.
In many instances, activists became involved with centers on campus because they wanted to, among other things, learn more about their personal identities. These Centers served as gateways to participating in advocacy and allyship and were extremely influential in helping activists develop their beliefs about advocacy and allyship as well as helping them feel a sense of connection. For example, Jacob explained to me how he intentionally sought out the LGBTQ center on campus to both feel supported and educate himself on his identity. Once at the center, Jacob began to develop his intersectional beliefs about advocacy and allyship:

I think initially from there, the LGBTQ center is very involved in intersectionality, and working with the other student centers. From there, I started learning more about people of color and queer people of color and branching out to create intersectional and focus on intersectional work within the LGBTQ center.

In this example, Jacob developed his intersectional beliefs about advocacy and allyship as a consequence of his initial desire to educate himself about queer rights. While Exploring Beliefs is a consequence of Educating Self, Feeling Connected is both a condition and consequence of Educating Self.

Mutually facilitated with feeling connected. When describing the dimensions of Educating Self, I offered examples where activists educated themselves by discussing issues of oppression with peers, family, and romantic partners. In these instances, Feeling Connected becomes inextricably linked to Educating Self. Jacob explained this connection well:

My boyfriend is Latinx. We have a lot of conversations about white beauty standards and Eurocentrism and things about how he's affected by those. It's very personal for
me to be connected to him and then on a daily basis, be reminded of these things and having to challenge them for myself, challenge them for him.

Jacob educates himself about Eurocentrism through having conversations with his boyfriend. Jacob allows himself to have these conversations because he feels connected to his boyfriend and his connection to his boyfriend increases because of these conversations.

All activists feel some sort of connection to others and feeling connected encourages their education. For example, I explained earlier how Scott's definitions of the queer community grew because of conversations he had with his friend. When I asked Scott who he had conversations with, he bluntly replied “mostly my friend group.”

In the example below, Charlotte demonstrated how she educates herself by processing and learning about issues of social justice with peers.

I think [I learned to process my own privilege] probably through [a social justice group on campus] and also just like discussion groups. …I'm a part of a large international ministry so like you walk in there and talk about the white-savior complex, everyone's kind of aware of it because it's either affected them personally or they've realized by relationships in that community, how it is wrong. So, processing with peers as well and like talking it through has been helpful. My roommate and I, I think we would have hour long conversations about social justice and like back and forth just because being able to verbally process through it helps it to kind of sink in and you do kind of understand what you actually think about it, too.

In this example, Charlotte is feeling connected with her peers and she continues to educate herself about issues of oppression.
**Raja's story.** As I explained in the *Becoming Aware* section, Raja first *Became Aware* that Trump was rescinding DACA by scrolling through her news feed. Raja shared that after reading her news feed she began to educate herself by reading more about DACA and the DREAMers. Not only did Raja educate herself about the issue, but she also deliberately researched ways to take action:

At first, it was a lot of research. Like, how do you organize a march? How does a person organize? And, then, a lot of it was calling people and saying, ‘Hey, could you help us with this? Could you tell us?’—like nonprofits, and other organizers, who made marches before. We talked to [name omitted], with the Peace Center [pseudonym], which was really, really helpful.

Raja’s action of researching both about DACA and DREAMers and how to organize illustrate the central property of *Educating Self*, which is intentionality. Raja *Educated Herself* through personal research, through bouncing ideas off her best friend and co-organizer, and through reaching out to more experienced organizers. In the act of *Educating Herself*, Raja was also forming community, which in return gave more avenues for her to continue to gain a deeper awareness about DACA.

**Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship.**

*Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* represents the process of cultivating ideas about what is effective advocacy and allyship as well as delineating what actions are considered to be advocacy and allyship and what actions are not. For example, does liking a post on Facebook “count” as advocacy and allyship? Activists may come to different conclusions through this process; however, all activists will form opinions when *Developing their beliefs about advocacy and allyship*. *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*
also represents a process in which activists progress an understanding of how advocacy and allyship are similar and dissimilar to one another. Initially this understanding is more of a feeling and then progresses toward cognition. *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is a process in which activists form opinions.

*Exploring Beliefs* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* and is a consequence of *Educating Self, Feeling Connected, Experiencing Affirmation, and Navigating Different Viewpoints*. The properties of *Exploring Beliefs* include finding agency, gaining vision for change, and relating to other marginalized identities. Dimensions of *Exploring Beliefs* include different types of vision and feelings about the challenges associated with advocacy versus challenges associated with allyship. Figure 10 illustrates the relationship between *Exploring Beliefs* and other categories and Figure 11 offers the properties and dimensions of *Exploring Beliefs*.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 10.** Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship.
Properties. I define finding agency as the first property of Exploring Beliefs. Like prevailing concepts in Mead's symbolic interactionism, which I identified as my theoretical framework in Chapter 2, Giddens (1979) concludes that agency and society have an intertwined relationship in which individual agency shapes society and society shapes individual agency.

![Properties and Dimensions Diagram]

**Figure 11.** Properties and Dimensions of Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship.

For the purpose of my study, finding agency represents an activist’s realization that personal actions can create positive change that contribute toward dismantling Through *Exploring Beliefs*, all activists begin to reason that they can use their voice and skills to fight social injustice.

When I asked Lee to describe a significant event that guided her toward advocacy and allyship, she shared a story with me about a teacher who first helped her recognize her agency:

[I had an] English teacher. All of us were trying to practice paragraphs, and we were supposed to write something about what the school needed to do. I wrote about parking, which it seems really silly, but I got a good grade on it, and it was the first
time that I got a grade back in college. She said that I should put it in the suggestion box and see if they fixed it or something like that. It dawned on me that I could do something. I know that sounds so silly, but it really meant a lot to me because, before, I didn't think that I could really do anything that mattered.

Although not related to oppression, in this example Lee articulated the precise moment where she realized that she could do something that, in her words, mattered. Zeitoun offered a great example of believing in her own agency to positively affect social change through her role with student government:

For me personally, in student government, I get the freedom to use my title to represent student government as a diverse organization. I get the ability to talk to people that direct the diversity. I get to talk to administrators. As a student leader, my voice becomes relevant.

Zeitoun believed that she found a role for her voice to become relevant through her involvement in student government.

Another form of agency that relates to Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship is the idea that finding success despite oppressive systems is a form of agency and advocacy. Raja shared:

Sometimes I think one of the biggest forms of activism is just—especially when you're a member of that community, is just being able to say, ‘You can do it because I did it.’ That's a big thing. That's what motivates me a lot of the time.

Another property of Exploring Beliefs that is closely related to finding agency is gaining a clear vision for change. Through Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, activists name solutions that they believe will help fight systemic oppression. Charlotte
concentrates on raising the Palestinian voice in bringing a peaceful solution to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict:

It's [Charlotte's allyship] mainly working with Palestinians to try and promote activism there, and support the activists who are Palestinian in Palestine. Also, because the conflict is so nuanced it has to include Israelis. Basically, just trying to create peacemaking between the two, and how we work on that on campus is supporting those activists and making their voices heard in the U.S. It is very much like one kind of rhetoric or one kind of dialogue that's used in the U.S. when considering Israel-Palestine.

Later in our interview, Charlotte explained that she believes there is a problem in our country in which people are not exposed to accurate narratives:

I also think that the people who generally talk about them, like when we talk about these kinds of conflicts or these kinds of things in mainstream media, and I think this goes to a lot of different oppressed communities, is just we don't have an—people just are not exposed to an accurate narrative, or accurate first world representations of people who have been oppressed. Like the Black experience in America, people are just not exposed to it enough. It's easy to stereotype or make these assumptions because if you only know of this one personal experience of one person you're going to assume that everyone else in that people group has had the same experience, and that's just not accurate. It's not seeing people as individuals, people as a group. I think that that's where I see the disconnect. There's just not understanding and awareness.
In this example, Charlotte’s vision for change is to bring forth a more accurate narrative in our country. When describing why she is an ally for groups for which she does not share membership, LK’s vision for change is to build coalitions among all marginalized identities:

If everyone stood up at once and said, ‘We are being pit against each other. We’re all going to convene under one movement,’ that would be extremely subversive. So, I hope to be that change and show up in all areas that need justice, need change because it's all linked I think.

In another example, Zeitoun shared her vision for change, which is to threaten litigation to encourage institutions to adopt more inclusive and socially just polices:

Just, general recognitions of differences and the bullying policy wasn’t that great at all. It was kind of, ‘Okay, you can file it. We'll sit down with somebody, we'll suspend them.’ No one ever bothered to get to the source of problems. All groups in that were affected. The nice thing is if you mention the name of NAACP or ACLU, people shut up and they will push forth because nobody wants them showing up at your town. It makes them look like the bad guys.

Finally, Paula explains that in her Environmental Science class she learned about different types of environmentalism such techno-centric, eco-centric and anthropocentric. Paula related why she is more anthropocentric in her environmental justice approach:

I think I am more anthropocentric, because if you don't focus on people ... There's some people who are techno-centric, they're like, ‘Technology will fix everything.’ So they're the people who are like, ‘We'll run all the airplanes on biodiesel, we'll do this.’ I want all those things to happen, but until you make companies and people at
the companies switch to those things, just 'cause you have technology won't mean that climate change is fixed, or stopped, or anything.

In these examples, activists identified and articulated how they go about creating change. They each have developed a vision for how to achieve a socially just world.

The final property of *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is relating to other marginalized identities in which the activist does not share membership. My model of advocacy and allyship stresses the importance of activists acting to fight oppression that relates to one of their marginalized identities and fighting oppression that relates to at least one other identity for which they do not share membership. As I explained earlier in this chapter, I quickly realized that these two distinct categories (advocacy and allyship) are messy. Nonetheless, a salient idea for my model is the explanation of how activists commit to and participate in both advocacy and allyship. Through *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*, all activists relate to the struggle and liberation of other marginalized groups.

When explaining the core category *Doing the Right Something*, I explained how Lee is motivated to fight oppression because she knows what it means to suffer and does not want other people to hurt.

Jacob describes a similar experience of relating to other marginalized communities because of his own struggles:

I think initially, I did a lot of self-advocacy, and turning in towards myself. I think recognizing how difficult it was for me to come to terms with my queer identity and to go through the experiences that I went through, helps me understand a little bit, to some extent, other communities, and how in different ways people can live with this consistent pressure and these oppressions.
I initially labeled this property *empathizing*; however, I changed it to *relating* because I did not find evidence that all activists fully empathized, popularly defined as ‘putting one’s self in another person shoes’. Jacob alludes to this with his use of the words *a little bit* and *to some extent*, implying that it is impossible to fully empathize. In my final example, Charlotte explained how she relates to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because of her South African heritage:

I think it also spoke to me because the lady who talked about it was South African. She talked about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an apartheid, because technically … a lot of political scientists will classify the conflict … as a modern-day apartheid. I think that specifically spoke to me, and knowing my own history, and knowing what I've come from and my own family's involvement, wanting to be like, ‘there's no way that this should still be allowed to be happening.’ It shouldn't have been allowed to happen in the first place in South Africa, and now that it's in Israel-Palestine it just probably touched something in me that made me really want to get involved.

**Dimension.** The largest dimension of *Exploring Beliefs* is the variety of conclusions activists draw about the relationship between advocacy and allyship. At the time I was coming up with my ideas for this research, I had been actively involved in advocacy for the queer community and allyship for racial, disability, and religious justice. Personally, I was reflecting on the similarities and dissimilarities I was experiencing in these spaces. As I became versed in popular ally literature in the field of higher education and education research, I realized that ally literature did not capture my experience as a person who holds both marginalized and privileged identities and felt that some of the literature, while foundational, was becoming outdated. So, I set out to understand how college students
commit to and engage in both advocacy and allyship. While conducting research, I realized that my participants did not always consciously take part in deep reflection on the difference and similarities. Nonetheless, when probed about the difference and similarities in advocacy and allyship, all participants began to articulate how advocacy and allyship felt similar, how they felt different, and how they overlapped. In other words, they were beginning to develop beliefs about advocacy and allyship and their relation to one another, despite their varying levels of consciousness to this process.

Activists differ in their opinions about these processes. For example, some activists felt that it was easier to be an ally while others felt like it was easier to be an advocate. Activists also differ on how much attention they give to their advocacy and allyship. I now turn to an explanation of these differences.

Some participants found allyship to be easier. Ngozi shared:

Honestly, I feel like sometimes having conversations as an ally is easier. I'd say that's probably for a couple of reasons—probably because you're not super personally connected to it, so even if you don't get a positive reaction I feel like it doesn't matter, but it just might not affect them as much?

Zeitoun similarly felt that allyship was both easier and more effective than her advocacy:

When I go up to advocate for Islam, specifically, it's not perceived as well as when I go advocate for even interfaith. If I go advocate for socioeconomic status, if I go advocate for the LGBTQ center, it's taken much more seriously because it's not like I'm trying to further my own cause. I'm furthering a cause that I don't necessarily identify with. It doesn't seem like there's a distortion of agendas there. That's why it's real easy for me to go and talk with some people like, ‘Oh no, they use this pronoun. I
know that your morals might not align with it, but it's not your preference, it's their preference.’ That's it at the end of the day, what are you going to do about it? It's so much easier saying that rather than telling somebody, you can't do this to me because I don't want you to do it. My religion, it's very self-centered. Vouching for yourself is self-centered. When you're vouching for someone else it sounds as though it's appropriate. It gets people more on board.

Raja felt differently than Zeitoun and Ngozi in that she believes her advocacy is easier:

In the queer community, I feel more comfortable taking on an educational role, and a leadership role, and taking ownership of that. In a lot of other places, it's like I'm doing the listening and the support, rather than, I can't fully understand someone else's lived experience and then advocate for that.

Lee explained how her advocacy for women is easier because she is just more aware of oppression women face than of oppression that other communities face.

I feel like my activism is always going to be first about—like I put women stuff first, above everything else, because I feel like that's what I experience the most, I guess. It's like I'm aware I'm a woman all the time. It's in my face and all that. So, it's always going to be maybe when I'm planning things out the first thing that I pay attention to.

Lee further explained:

It's [allyship] harder because I'm not living it, and it's like I have to go off of what I think I know, but I still will say stuff about things and everything. It's different because I'm coming from a point where it's not me and something I live with, but I try
to get them to think how I think about it or how I got to thinking about whatever the subject is.

Charlotte explained her challenges with allyship specifically as it relates to being invited in versus overstepping in an allyship role:

So, I also feel like I maybe sometimes defending people who I don't really have the right to defend. I may be aligning myself with them but by my own choosing, not by feeling like I've been invited into that allyship, which is not necessarily something I need to be invited into. Because me saying ‘you going to Uganda and helping orphans is really bad’ is my opinion, and it would be better if somebody who was Ugandan came in and was like, ‘I actually think that's really bad,’ and they might have a more nuanced view of it isn't always bad, sometimes it helps. Whereas I may view it as ‘No, that's just wrong.’ I think that it's a balancing act of knowing where your allyship is going too far.

Despite this challenge, Charlotte finds herself acting as an ally for groups that she is not a part of more than being an advocate for herself. Choosing to spend more time on allyship or more time on advocacy is another dimension of Exploring Beliefs. When I asked Charlotte why she thinks this is the case she responded:

I'm not really sure. I'm trying to think of why my priorities have fallen [on allyship more than advocacy] … Maybe I think [university name omitted] has a lot of efforts in organizations that are working against sexism and these institutional things that are oppressive to women. There are a lot of organizations that are already working on that, whereas I think that as far as peace in Israel-Palestine, or ethical travel, or even sex trafficking there just aren't as many people working on that. Maybe that's
viewing myself too highly—but I'm seeing there's more of a need for people in these different areas than there is here. Though I think there could be more people working everywhere. That might not be the real reason. I'm trying to think through my own motivations and whether or not that's actually my reason or if that's just what I'm telling myself.

When Charlotte was explaining her allyship priorities to me, she hesitated more than when answering other questions; her answers were forthcoming about not fully understanding herself and why she focuses more on allyship. I take Charlotte at her word when she says she sees a void on campus of people fighting for causes such as Palestinian rights or against sex trafficking. However, this quote supports my assertion that college student activists are not fully aware of their motives behind the specifics of their advocacy and allyship.

Other activists spend more time participating in advocacy. For example, Sandy explained that his activism focuses more on the LGBTQ community because he identifies with this community. When asked if he takes more actions to fight oppression for certain groups, Sandy responded:

I think that, I don't know. I would say no with a stipulation that I think that I do. I think there are groups that I take more action for than other groups that I'm not a part of. But, it's not by a drastic difference. … but it's relatively more so for other groups that I'm a part of. I wouldn't say I put in the same amount of, I guess, energy and resources [for groups I'm not a part of] as much as I would for a GSA [gay-straight alliance] database, or Safe2Pee, kind of thing. You know what I mean? I don't do that. With that [groups Sandy is not a part of] I just participate in those kinds of dialogues.
In this statement, Sandy initially claimed that he does not spend more time in any one area of advocacy or allyship; however, in his reflection he quickly contradicts himself and realizes that he spends more time advocating for the queer community.

**Relationships.** *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something*. In addition, *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is also a consequence of *Educating Self, Feeling Connected, Experiencing Affirmation, and Navigating Different Viewpoints*.

**A reminder of previously discussed relationships.** As previously discussed, *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* (see pp. 171-174). These categories are mutually facilitated because neither one necessarily precedes one another. Furthermore, both categories act as consequences of one another. The specific opinions activists form through the process of *Exploring Beliefs* often results in *Doing the Right Something* as activists begin to actively experiment with aligning their beliefs and action. Conversely, the act *Doing the Right Something* informs the activist opinions as they *Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*.

I have also already discussed the relationship between *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* and *Educating Self* (see pp. 207-208). Often as a result of *Educating Self*, activists begin to *Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*. It is important to remember that through seeking out more information about oppression, activists begin to form opinions on how to ethically and effectively fight oppression. After a period of educating self, an activist both forms and is able to articulate their specific opinions about advocacy and allyship.
Consequence of feeling connected. Feeling Connected to others in many ways influences the opinions that activists reach when Developing their Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship. LK provided a strong example of this influence when she shared the story about her best friend calling out her racism when they were in high school:

So, this was back in high school before [I] developed my intersectional approach to activism. This was back when I was like, ‘Reverse racism is real. It was my friend [name omitted] who—she's a woman of color, she's from Puerto Rico—and she pretty much sat me down and she was like, ‘You're wrong.’ She called me out and said, ‘it makes me really uncomfortable that you hold these views.’ She even recommended me a bunch of racial trainings and whatnot and then I didn't end up attending them and she got pretty upset with me over that. And she was like, ‘How can you be claiming to be doing the work for racial justice but then you won't sit down and listen to people of color?’ And I was like, ‘Oh shit. You're right. I need to sit down. I need to step back. I need to know when to step up, when to step back.’ There's stepping up and organizing, and then there's stepping back and amplifying. So I just try to find a balance.

Because of her relationship with her best friend, LK Developed a Belief that allyship requires the ability to take a step back and listen to the experiences of marginalized populations and use positionality to amplify rather than supplant marginalized voices.

Consequence of navigating different viewpoints. Similarly, Navigating Different Viewpoints influences Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship. In the example below, Lee explained her experiences trying to change her family’s views about race and immigration:
I'll talk to them about racism and stuff. Sometimes with my dad, since he was abusive, sometimes it's better to just [not say something] but other times they'll [Lee’s family] say something so stupid. I don't know if you've ever noticed, but ABC stores, some of them have red dots, and my dad said something about Black people couldn't read, so that's why they had the dots on it. I was like, ‘What in the world, what are you talking about and where are you getting this from, and why are you going to say that?’ Then he was saying other racial slurs and other things, and I was just like, ‘You need to quit right now.’ I feel like immigration is a racialized thing, for sure, and so they'll [Lee’s family] try to talk about stuff like that and make immigration and race be in together or whatever. Like brown people are not supposed to be here or something, in their minds. I'll try to get them to realize how problematic that is and how as long as you're not Native American, you came over here. You didn't belong here. I try to get them to think of it that way, and then they have this idea that kids [whose] parents brought them here shouldn't be here, and I'm like, ‘They didn't have anything to do with it,’ and plus they come over here not all the time, but they just didn't have anywhere else to go sometimes. I don't know. I try to get them to stop thinking of things as different, they're not. I know they see them as people, but they don't see them as people enough. I try to get them to see the people that they talk crap about as people more, I guess.

Because of her interaction with her family and navigating their different ideologies, Lee Develops the Belief that humanizing marginalized groups is necessary to dismantle systemic oppression. Lee believes that if individuals who hold discriminatory and prejudicial beliefs
about specific groups could understand that the groups are people who share the same emotions that they do, then they would change their oppressive beliefs about these groups.

**Consequence of experiencing affirmation.** Exploring Beliefs is also a consequence of Experiencing Affirmation. Experiencing Affirmation helps reassure activists of their actions and in return this reassurance helps solidify the opinions they are forming while Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship. In the example below, Paula explained why she believes that challenging others in a confrontational way is not effective:

I feel like challenging problematic statements is not what I do, maybe inside, when I'm like, ‘Oh, my god.’ But you can't change someone by yelling at them or correcting them. I have had a lot of friends who I've had discussions with. …I have friends who are African, and a lot of African culture is very conservative. To them, being homophobic was the norm and not because they hated gay people, but that's what they were taught their whole life and they were not okay talking to me about it. And I was like, ‘I'm okay talking to you about it because if you have questions, we can move.’ And, by the end, a lot of them did become very LGBTQ friendly, but it's only because they started talking about it and tried to get more informed with issues.

In this example, Paula experiences affirmation because her friends became very LGBTQ friendly. Consequently, Paula’s opinion that discussions are more effective than confrontation is reinforced.

**Raja's story.** The first property of Exploring Beliefs is finding agency. Raja explained how she ended up organizing the march after her friend asked her why there was not a local march planned in response to DACA:
After sitting there for a second, it was just like a snap. I was like, "Wait, we could totally do this… Whoa, we can actually do this… and I was really realizing I could make a difference, I got really excited about it.

The second property of *Exploring Beliefs* is relating to other marginalized identities. As I have already explained, Raja relates to DACA recipients because of her identity as a daughter of immigrants. During the march, Raja shared with me that although her parents immigrated legally, she would understand if they chose to enter the U.S. illegally. Their circumstances in India were incredibly hard. Although she is not a DACA recipient, Raja could not imagine having to leave the country just because her parents wanted a better life for themselves and their kids. In this way she hypothetically relates to the position of current DREAMers.

The last property of *Exploring Beliefs* is gaining a vision for change. Previously, I showcase the # Defend DACA rally mission statement located in the program guide. In this guide, Raja and her friend articulated that their vision for change is to showcase the power of unity their home city. After organizing the march, Raja developed more opinions about effective advocacy and allyship. During our follow-up interview after the DACA march, I ask Raja how she felt it went. She responded:

I think it went really well. I think we had a good turnout. The only thing that I would want to change about it is that I wish we had made a more tangible difference. Like, we made an impact, but not necessarily a difference, if you know what I mean. Like, we made an impact, we came out, and we were like, "DREAMers are here. They're a powerful part of the community." And, then, we just went back. And, it's almost back to the same situation, except some people know about it. I mean, that's good, it's
really good. But, as I'm growing up, I'm more like knowledge and awareness is really important. But, there's so much more to it. And it's like, awareness is very important but it's not going to solve the problem. And, it's not even that impactful. Like, if people know that people are hungry, and there's only a slim chance they're going to actually do anything, it's not helpful at all. With DACA, it's like a weird thing because it's legal. So, it's like, awareness is super important but I really wish we could've included—our original plan was to have letters written to the representatives, to our congressmen.

Raja continues to develop beliefs about effective advocacy after the rally as she wrestles with ideas of awareness and impact.

**Navigating Different Viewpoints**

*Navigating Different Viewpoints* represents the process in which activists encounter different, opposing, and often oppressive ideologies and must choose their course of action. Fighting oppression is inherently a fight against the status quo to dismantle deeply ingrained oppressive beliefs and structures. Consequently, college student activists will inevitably navigate different viewpoints. The first property of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is encountering different viewpoints of others, both expected and unexpected. Another property of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is confusion caused by these different viewpoints. Dimensions of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* include the choice to always speak up versus the choice to pick your battles and questioning others line of reason versus telling one’s own story. *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is a consequence of *Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship* and is both a consequence and a condition of *Doing the Right Something*. I illustrate the relationship of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* to other
categories in Figure 12. I illustrate the properties of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* in Figure 13.

**Sociopolitical Climate**  
And  
Identity

**Navigating Different Viewpoints**

Doing the Right Something  
Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship

**Key**  
Consequence  
Mutually Facilitated

**Figure 12.** Navigating Different Viewpoints.

**Properties**  
- Encountering difference  
- Confusion

**Dimension**  
- Always speak up vs. picking your battles  
- Questioning vs. telling

**Figure 13.** Properties and Dimensions of Navigating Different Viewpoints.
Properties. The first property of Navigating Different Viewpoints is encountering difference. When activists Navigate Different Viewpoints, they must interact with others who hold differing beliefs. Many participants in this study shared memorable moments of encountering or meeting people who both thought differently and sometimes held problematic, discriminatory, and oppressive beliefs. Paula shared how coming to college was the first time she experienced people who believed differently than she did:

Before college, I didn't really know any Republicans. I lived in [city name omitted] Everywhere I went was really liberal. And either we didn't have conservatives, or we didn't really talk about it because it was such a liberal environment, which is its own problem. So, college was the first time I actually met conservatives who were like, ‘[These are] my beliefs. Listen to them.’

LK offers an example of encountering people who held viewpoints that were believed to be discriminatory. In the example below, LK shared a memorable experience from high school when she started a gender equality club and some of her classmates did not agree with this action:

We actually had a group of boys sabotage our planning Google document, which was open. If you had the link you could come in and edit our plans for future meetings and whatnot, and a group of boys went on it and sabotaged it.

LK explained that these boys gained access to their planning documents sabotaged them because they did not believe that women should create a gender equality club. Jacob shared a similar experience of encountering discriminatory beliefs in the residence hall at his university.
I live in [name omitted] residence hall. And there's been issues of homophobia and misogyny and macroaggressions that had been occurring against me that I wanted to address. So, in a private Facebook group with everybody, I was posting about that. And then I hosted an educational forum, and then nobody came. So, I got upset and made a petty post, and then got everybody mad at me, and saying that I was calling them homophobic was offensive. And then after that, someone posted at one point about going to [a gay bar], and I said if you're not gay or going with gay friends, please don't load up a party bus of thirty straight people and go to [bar name omitted]. And there was a lot of backlash to that too in terms of, ‘that's reverse discrimination,’ and ‘I'm pro-diversity, but you're infringing on my rights as a straight person.’ I was like, ‘Oh, God.’

In each of these examples, the experience of encountering different beliefs is memorable and formidable for the activist. After the encounter, the activist must choose a course of action.

There are several emotions a college student activist experiences when Navigating Different Viewpoints. Jacob further explained to me that he felt hurt, frustrated, and angry about his experience in the residence hall. He also felt genuinely confused by the fact that his peers in the residence hall did not understand why going to a gay bar when you are straight is problematic. Confusion is a salient emotion for all college student activists when they navigate difference. Although activists may be also frustrated, sad, or angry, activists in my study uniformly experienced initial confusion by how others think and act. Consequently, confusion is the second property of Navigating Different Viewpoints.

Sandy explained how his dad’s racial and heteronormative comments confused him as a kid:
I was more confused at first. I think that that mindset made me see people in a different way. It was more just noticing that pattern and noticing that not everyone seemed to think the same thing. So that was more of a cognitive processing.

Ngozi explained that when she meets people who do not consider themselves feminist, she is just overwhelmingly confused:

I would consider myself a feminist. Yeah, I do think gender—I guess I don’t know … I don't really understand why this is even a thing. I just feel like that [being a feminist] just makes sense. I think I guess that's why—I really used to think that people just didn't know what it was—but I guess I knew that people just like women to do stuff in my mind. But yeah, I am for gender equality.

Finally, Paula explains that she is continually confused by people who identify as Republicans. I asked Paula to explain how she responds when she encounters different political ideologies and she responded:

I think it makes me dig in deeper to my own values, and it has also confused me. I don't think I still understood that dynamic of interacting with Republicans very well. ‘Cause I know at points I was talking to my roommate about it, ‘cause she's from a very conservative area, and we were talking about compassion. And I was like, ‘To me, it's hard to see’—this is a huge generalization, but we were talking about it—Republicans as compassionate. Because to her, compassion was very much volunteering, donating. And I'm like, ‘Yes, those are really good acts of service, and good, but to me if you're advocating for policy that could hurt people, like you're okay with the symptoms but not the problem.’ And to me, that's not compassionate, knowing that you're putting someone at risk.
During our interviews, I felt the genuine emotion of confusion when participants shared their examples of *Navigating Different Viewpoints*. As previously discussed, college student activists define *Doing the Right Something* as morally just and good. When confronted with people who have unjust or oppressive viewpoints as defined by the participant, college student activists have an authentically hard time understanding these actions. Nonetheless, when *Navigating Different Viewpoints*, college student activists must decide whether to engage. A dimension of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is the choice to act every time or the choice to pick one’s battles.

**Dimensions.** Some activists believe it is appropriate to speak up or take action anytime they are made of oppression or find themselves in a problematic situation. During our second interview, Zeitoun adamantly told me that when she recognizes injustice or oppressive action, she always speaks up. When I asked Zeitoun if she ever witnessed an unjust action and chose not to engage she responded:

> Honestly, I don't think so. … no. no, honestly, I don't know if it sounds full of myself but no.

I probed further and asked if she could envision a hypothetical situation in which she would choose not to speak up and again Zeitoun responded:

> Oh wow. Honestly? I think well no, because I've had experiences I'm standing there with people where I'm being directly targeted but I have one person or two people sitting next to me that could do something about it, and they choose not to, and that's the worst feeling ever. It's kind of like that slap in the face. It's like, ‘Wow.’

Finally, I asked Zeitoun if she would speak up in situations that were similar to situations where other activists in this study chose not to act. The examples I provided include: if she
felt her life was threatened; if she was unsure about how to respond; or in cases where she did not think people would listen to her. Zeitoun responded that she absolutely would speak up in all those cases and has.

Sandy similarly shared that while he is sure there are times he was unconscious of oppression and so did not act, in his recent memory he could not think of any time where he consciously chose not to act:

I'm having trouble thinking of a time. My first thought was when I learned what the meaning of ‘dixie’ was in the alma mater and I was orientation leader. Even then, I took action. I changed it to pixies when I was singing because we had to sing the song every day. So I was like, ‘When the winds of pixies softly blow.’ I'm trying to think of a time where I didn't. I think I'll always do something. I think I will always take action, but it's a lot more subtle sometimes. If it's a situation where I don't feel comfortable taking very, loud and vocal action, it's usually more subtle. In the past someone called something really gay or really queer and I made some snide comment that could have been interpreted as a joke, but to everyone who knew me it wasn't a joke. To this guy I think it made him think about it a week later.

While Zeitoun and Sandy act anytime they are conscious of injustices, other participants in this study pick their battles. Scott explained that he only challenges problematic statements with specific people:

I do [challenge others], but with specific people. I wouldn't go up to my grandpa who has lived in a rural county for his whole entire life and be like, where do you stand on HB2? Just ask him about this, because for people like that, or people like my family, like my extended family, it's more of a touchy subject, and I am directly related to
them and I'm going to have to hear about it forever. I don't engage with them as much unless it's a pointed remark towards something that is actually happening today.

LK explained that she will not engage in conversations when she feels attacked:

I'm only going give folks the time of day who approach me as a human first, and ask me, ‘Why do you hold the perspectives that you hold? Why are you doing what it is that you do.’ I can only engage in conversation. I cannot engage with somebody throwing rocks at me in conversation.

Ngozi clarified that while she often speaks up and confronts injustice, sometimes she does not engage in conversation with someone who holds different views in order to maintain her self-care:

I think, one, being in my own head is something that definitely—the times that I'll see things happen but I'm too busy worrying or I'm dealing with all this stuff. So, I'm not gonna try to go out [and engage]. I know times when I do step out is generally when I feel very confident in myself and in my situations. So one, being in my own head. Two, I think even it just kind of goes into that. It generally has to do with how I'm feeling and where I feel emotionally and spiritually. If I feel like I just have a lot of—I'm a pretty emotional person as well, so honestly I feel a lot of things—and so if I'm dealing with a lot of stuff, like with my friends or something like that, which can sound really trivial, but for me sometimes is super weighty. If I'm in my own head, where I feel emotionally drained already, I'm probably not goanna be standing up.

Another dimension of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* is choosing a strategy of telling versus choosing a strategy of questioning. Telling refers to the strategy of sharing with another person why their viewpoint is problematic while questioning refers to the strategy of
asking questions to challenge potentially unexamined oppressive beliefs. Scott explained that he approaches *Navigating Different Viewpoints* by questioning why the person believes the way they do:

I tend to approach things more by questioning the person, why they believe what they believe. At least what I found, everybody has their own experience, everybody has reason for why they're doing something. If their reason is just because their parents like that, and just because they've lived on a farm for 16, 17, 18, 19 years, I want them to—even if they're okay with keeping those same beliefs just for that reason—I want them to at least question themselves and be like, ‘Alright, it's unjustified, but my reason for saying, this is simply because I was born at this place with these people.’ I guess I don't want to tell people what they should think. I want them to ask them, why they think what they're thinking, and then want to change because of that.

Lee similarly explained that she often employs the strategy of asking questions when *Navigating Different Viewpoints*. In the example below, Lee explained how she navigated an experience she had with an acquaintance of hers:

He's kinda my friend but not really my friend. He's a Republican that voted Trump and all that. He was talking about something and he was calling somebody a thug and I was like, ‘What's a thug? What are you saying?’ I was questioning him like, ‘What is that? What do you think about? Why would you call somebody that?’ And all that kind of stuff. And I guess I just question them and try to ask constructive questions.
Other activists tend to share their own personal story to bring attention to oppressive or discriminatory beliefs. For example, Charlotte explained that she finds sharing personal stories is a very effective way to challenge racist thoughts of others:

Oh, so there's a friend of mine. … We often like sit near each other to study and stuff. And so we'll have great conversations and he really doesn't understand like Black Lives Matter movement and wanting to bring down [the Confederate statue] and like things like that. And so, we'll have good conversations about that and I find the most powerful way to push against some of his assumptions is by personal anecdotes, because I think—and especially my personal anecdotes—that those aren't things that can be disputed. Like me feeling a way or seeing something that happened is not something that can be like, “Oh well, that didn't happen.’ No, like ‘I'm telling you truthfully that it did and so it's not easily disputed with.’ It's like [with] facts and figures are also really good and definitely come up, but are more kind of like, well that's one study says that but another study will say this and so are a little more tenuous. And so, I think personal anecdotes or experiences [are powerful].

Other activists shared that sometimes telling people about the impact of their problematic or oppressive actions is necessary.

**Relationships.** Earlier in this chapter I explained how *Navigating Different Viewpoints* and *Doing the Right Something* are mutually facilitated (see pp. 174-175). I also explained how *Navigating Different Viewpoints* leads to *Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship*, which makes it a condition for this category (see page 223-225). Therefore, I do not deeply dive into these relationships again here, but briefly mention them to remind the
reader of how *Navigating Different Viewpoints* connects to other categories in my theory of advocacy and allyship.

**A reminder of previously discussed relationships.** The result of *Navigating Different Viewpoints* action often leads the activists to further *Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*. In the example I mentioned earlier in the chapter, Lee's interaction with her racist, homophobic, and sexist family leads her to develop the belief that effective advocacy and allyship means helping people who hold oppressive beliefs about another group realize the humanity in the groups of people for which they holds these problematic viewpoints toward.

*Navigating Different Viewpoints* and *Doing the Right Something* are mutually facilitated categories because they often occur at the same time and they often influence each other. Every time activists have an encounter with someone who holds problematic and oppressive viewpoints which differ than theirs, they are presented an opportunity to *Do the Right Something* and act in a way that may change the oppressive viewpoints of another person. In the examples, I mentioned earlier in the chapter, LK and Ngozi both encountered peers who held different viewpoints about the Trump election and the placement of Confederate statues on college campuses. In both of these examples, LK and Ngozi chose to engage their peers with the hopes of confronting racist undertones in their peers’ beliefs.

**Raja's story.** Raja first had to navigate different opinions while organizing the #Defend DACA rally when an internet troll posted anti-immigrant videos on their #Defend DACA Facebook page. While prepping for the rally the day of the event, Raja shared with me that at first she did not know how to respond to the troll; however, she and Kayla decided to disengage from the troll and simply take down the post. Raja’s second time navigating different viewpoints also occurred on Facebook. Someone who supported DACA and the
DREAMers did not like the rules, such as no music makers or profanity, that Raja and Kayla outlined for the rally. In this instance, Raja and Kayla chose to engage with this person and explain why they chose the rules they did.

At the actual rally, several experienced activists lead mini-trainings on what to do when meeting counter-protesters. These trainings occurred for 45 minutes prior to the march. Raja did not lead the trainings; the activists running these mini-workshops did so on their own initiative. When I asked Raja about how she was feeling when an older activist was speaking about common self-defense moves, she told me she had not really thought about meeting counter-protesters but she was glad that others in the crowd had and that they were preparing just in case. During the rally, the #Defend DACA marchers did not meet any counter protesters; however, the significance of the mini-workshops prior to the rally served as a reminder that they could have.

**Feeling Connected**

*Feeling Connected* represents the ways in which activists connect with other humans such as a close partner, friends, family, or mentors. *Feeling Connected* is a condition of *Exploring Beliefs* and is mutually facilitated with *Educating Self*, *Experiencing Affirmation*, and *Doing the Right Something*. Properties of *Feeling Connected* include having an activist role model, experiencing trust, and developing friendship. Dimensions of *Feeling Connected* include purposefully looking for connection versus stumbling upon connections. Figure 14 illustrates the relationships between *Feeling Connected* and the other categories. Figure 15 details the properties and dimensions of *Feeling Connected*.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the importance of negative cases when developing substantive theory and my challenges in finding true negative cases. Consequently, I focused
my final sampling efforts on exploring negative instances in which participants in my study indicated that they were decreasing their activist efforts rather than increasing them. Although every category in my theory is critical for the process of advocacy and allyship to take place, the data derived from focusing on these negative instances suggest that a reduction specifically in *Feeling Connected* or *Experiencing Affirmation* drove this slight retreat in activist efforts. Conversely, I did not find any evidence to suggest that a reduction in the other categories influenced these negative instances. Consequently, I include an analysis of negative instances only in these final categories. Specific to *Feeling Connected*, the data suggest that if an activist loses their feeling of connection to their peers or if the connection is severely weakened, they either reduce or alter their participation in advocacy and allyship.

**Figure 14.** Feeling Connected.
Properties. The first property of Feeling Connected is having an activist role model. College student activists connect with older activists, even if they do not know the activist. For example, LK explained how Malala, the young Pakistani Muslim activist, is her activist role model, although she is not sure why:

Malala [is a role model]. I can't quite explain why, but I view her as a very powerful woman, and to literally get shot in the face by your oppressor and to say, ‘Screw you I'm going to go and get an education, and make speeches, and change the world,’ that to me as a high schooler I was like, ‘Wow. You can look your oppressor in the face and say, 'No, we're going to change what is important to be changed.'

In this example, LK felt a connection with Malala, an activist who stands up to grave oppression, even though she has not met or interacted with her. LK resonates and is inspired by Malala’s story. LK then went on to explain how the director of the LGBTQ center on her campus is also a role model:

And actually [name omitted], the director the LGBTQ Center is so awesome that she kind of potentially inspired, did inspire a potential career that I'm thinking on still.

Scott explained how his older sisters serve as role models for him:
I'd say 100% my sisters are probably [my biggest role models] They've always been the biggest driver of me experiencing change or something like that. They are all extremely active in their communities and my sister is going into—my second oldest sister, [name omitted], she's going into International Peace and Security studies. She's always been an advocate of that and they've always been advocates for their respective communities and it's only gotten greater. We have a Facebook group chat and every day there's hundreds of messages about what they can do to change the communities they're in. Thinking about that I'm like, ‘Wow, I have a great family and they're changing this and I want to be a part of this.’

In this example, Scott stays connected to his sisters through Facebook. The connection he feels to his sisters inspires his own advocacy. In this example, Paula explained how her grandmother, who is her namesake, is a role model for her:

I guess to me, my family had always taught me to get involved. My grandma. She's the one. My grandma has been a huge civil rights fighter, in a way, like she's not famous or anything. But she's also white. So she's a really cool ally to have at things and hear her perspective. So she would go, like when they had the voter registration stuff, she was like, ‘Yeah, I used to go to the tense area and be around the Black students, cause they can't shoot them if there's enough white people there.’ And so she would go to these things, and it was super dangerous, because she's like if there's a white person, people won't die. That's her reason. So that was my grandma, doing those sort of things. She's a huge feminist. And in Tanzania, she lives there now, she fights for gender rights and consults with the UN, and she's like, ‘This is what we need to do for women farmers to have the same abilities as men farmers, they're not
accessing things.’ So she works a lot in that, in economics and agriculture and gender equality. That's a big thing for her.

No matter the degree the relationship an activist has with their role model, they feel a sense of connection to this person.

The second property of *Feeling Connected* is experiencing trust, which activists develop through their connections with others. Sandy, who identified his boyfriend Matt as his activist role model, explained that he is able to process issues around oppression because he trusts Matt:

I also felt more comfortable challenging some of the things that he was saying, some of the things that I didn't understand. And those dialogues are a lot more productive, if that makes sense, than they would have been with someone else. Because I think that, I mean, there's a lot of things that you might not feel comfortable saying in an open setting with someone but that you're even wondering about. And those conversations are a lot more easy to have with someone who you love and trust.

Similarly, LK explained how the vulnerability of her friends, their encouragement, and their trust helped encourage her advocacy and allyship:

My friends who had also been through abuse and who were open about it with me, and when they would come up to me and say, ‘Hey, if you can be open about this then I feel like I can too.’ So definitely other women identifying peers inspired me because [if] folks hadn't come up to me and said like, ‘Hey you've inspired me to become more outward about my beliefs,’ then maybe it would have been harder for me.
LK’s example of her friend’s vulnerability alludes to the third and final property of Feeling Connected: developing friendships. Raja explained how she left an old friend group for a new friend group that cared more about advocacy and allyship:

Last year I had a group of friends that weren't the best group of friends just because they didn't like talking about any of this kind of stuff, and for me, it's something that's so integral to my rights, I was like, ‘That's your prerogative but I can't.’ Now this year I have a lot of group of friends who love talking about it. We like talking about it.

Zeitoun also explained how she developed a wide range of friends through her coalition building and student government work:

I have a wide array of friends and peers, and their backgrounds are very distinct and different, and I love that about it. And part of it was that I was able to, if I ever came across a problem, I didn't just approach it from my background, I also would approach it from the backgrounds of all these other things I'd heard about. So when I heard about an issue that was going on, I was like, ‘Yeah, I'd love to do this initiative.’ The first thing that I would, and I still do it, is like have you talked to so and so, or let me give you a number for this person, and let me tell you about this theory or this conflict that's going on or this resource that you can use. And that's a big part of it.

While all activists experience Feeling Connected, the degree to which they purposefully seek out connection through advocacy and allyship varies.
Dimensions. When finding connection, some activists actively seek out activist communities, while some stumble across them. Charlotte exemplifies a person who actively seeks out community:

I'm an over-planner, so I looked at all of the student organizations before I came to campus and immediately was like the [Social Justice Center] is my place. Really felt like I found a niche there and people who also were failing but trying to be better at thinking about social justice, and talking about social justice, and doing social activism. I feel like a lot of times, I think especially in social justice work it's a lot of, 'We tried this, it didn't really work but we tried this other thing,' and building off of it. Working with people to do that process, and being around people who are all passionate about that stuff, and usually a whole different slew of issues.

When I asked Charlotte if she purposefully chose the university she attends because of the Social Justice Center, she said yes and also named the International and Global Studies department as a deciding factor in her decision. When graduating high school, Charlotte intentionally looked for communities that aligned with her advocacy and allyship.

Jacob explained how he also intentionally looked for an institution where he could find community by making sure that the college he attended had a LGBTQ center:

Yeah. I think my activism initially started out as just being a member of the queer community and growing up in an oppressive and uncomfortable household situation. As soon as I came to college, I saw an outlet for that. My initial way was, I went straight to the LGBTQ center as soon as I got on campus.

Raja, LK, and Sandy also explained to me that during their first semester at college they intentionally went to identity-based centers on campus to look for a community. In contrast,
some activists felt like they stumbled across activist communities. Scott provided the best example of a person who simply fell in to an activist crowd by meeting his now-partner, Raja, during orientation.

I was just sitting in [the student union] by myself, at a table by myself. I didn't know what to do. I was texting all of my sisters I'm like, ‘What do I do? I can't talk to people what is this?’ I noticed it was time to get up so I stood up and I followed just a group of girls. It was two girls and then Raja was following them, and I just sat beside her. I found out that she was going to the same major, she lived in the building right beside me and it just spiraled away from there... and so folding into that, connecting with her specifically.

Scott’s story becomes a little disjointed; however, he relayed to me that after meeting Raja during orientation, he just fell into an activist crowd and his advocacy and allyship continued to grow.

**Relationships.** *Feeling Connected* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* (see pp. 175-176), *Educating Self* (see pp. 208-210), and *Experiencing Affirmation*; this final relationship is explained below. Additionally, *Feeling Connected* is a condition for *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*. I previously discuss the inverse of this relationship when I described how *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy* is a consequence of *Feeling Connected* (see p. 222-223). After a brief reminder of the previously discussed relationships, I expand upon the thus far unexplained relationship between *Feeling Connected* and *Experiencing Affirmation*.

A reminder of previously discussed relationships. *Feeling Connected* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self* because *Feeling Connected* is
both a precursor and the byproduct of *Doing the Right Something* and *Educating Self*. Through *Doing the Right Something* activists often find community and this activist community often creates more opportunities to take more anti-oppressive action. Similarly, *Feeling Connected* is mutually facilitated with *Educating Self* because many activist in this study demonstrated how they *Educated Themselves* through processing ideas about advocacy and allyship with their community and how they were motivated by their community to personally educate themselves about oppressive structures that their friends, family and role models face.

I have also previously discussed how *Feeling Connected* is a condition for Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship. In the example, I mentioned earlier in the chapter, LK shared how a close friend called her out for believing that reverse racism, the idea that white people can also experience systemic racism, existed. Through this experience, LK eventually took a step back to reexamine her beliefs and concluded that effective allyship requires a person to examine their own biases and to authentically listen to the experiences of marginalized groups. Had LK not felt a connection with her close friend, she may not have been as motivated to take a step back and reexamine her beliefs about advocacy and allyship.

*Mutually facilitated with experiencing affirmation.* Because Similarity, *Feeling Connected* is also mutually facilitated with *Experiencing Affirmation*.

Often, when an activist is *Feeling Connected*, they are simultaneously *Experiencing Affirmation*. For example, when I asked Sandy to explain a meaningful experience related to his advocacy and allyship, Sandy shared:
I had two friends, two fellow coworkers from orientation this summer describe me as being very mature, and a role model, like out of the blue and helpful to them with figuring out their identities. That meant a lot to me.

In this example, Sandy experienced affirmation as a result of his advocacy. He also shared that he developed a deeper connection with his coworkers by forming a friendship with them. When I asked Lee to describe how she went from not calling herself a feminist to calling herself a feminist, she explained:

I had another teacher in my first community college, well, teachers have always been moms to me—the special teachers are like my moms—I had this English teacher… I really liked her a lot, she was hard to talk to, but I still just thought she was the coolest, smartest thing ever and I wanted to be just like her. She was so, so smart, like super smart. And introduced me to—she made me feel good about myself.

In this example, not only is Lee experiencing a parental-like relationship with her teacher, she is also experiencing affirmation because this teacher is making Lee feel good about herself. *Feeling Connected* often leads to *Experiencing Affirmation* as activists are receiving reassurance of their advocacy and allyship work. Conversely, *Experiencing Affirmation* leads to greater feelings of connection and gratitude for others.

**Negative instances.** As previously discussed, I was not able to find any participants who participated in advocacy and allyship and then quit all together. However, several participants in my study stopped taking certain actions in their advocacy and allyship or began to reduce their activist efforts as it related to a specific cause. In the example below, LK explained why she stopped attended the LGBTQ center on campus:
Coming in my freshman year, I was still naïve about a lot of things, as all freshman are. And I thought, ‘Oh. If they’re queer they must be an ally to me. If they’re queer they must be totally intersectional, totally wise, and I can trust every single queer person I meet.’ And then I went and I hung out at the LGBTQ Center and got involved in the community. I made a lot of really great friends that way, met a lot of other activists. But I also met a lot of like centrist pushback and really toxic behavior from peers. So, I actually don't hang out in the LGBTQ Center anymore. …because my activism was seen as fringe within the social groups. I had other queers and trans people even being like, ‘Your activism is too pushy. You're only hurting your own causes.’ I even had people insult me personally, being like, ‘What you're doing is really stupid and you're stupid.’ So just because of the dynamics became a little toxic I stopped going to the LGBTQ Center, which was hard.

LK still identifies as an advocate and ally in the LGBTQ community; however, I noticed in our interviews that a majority of her current advocacy and allyship did not directly relate to the queer community. I fully believe that LK, who is more radical compared to other participants in the study, challenges homophobia and transphobia. However, during college she went from being very active in the LGBTQ center to not being active in the center. Consequently, she does not take part in some of the queer advocacy efforts that her peers do. I believe there is a correlation between LK feeling a loss of friendship and community within the LGBTQ center and her decision to no longer participate at the center.

Similarly, Lee explained in our first interview that she would show up to any activist causes as long as she was made aware of them. However, by our second interview, Lee explained that she was not as active as she was a few months earlier. When I asked her why,
she responded, "I feel like there's not—I don't know of a lot of things going on that people are doing. Nobody's been sending me invites recently to anything." It is hard to measure the quantity of how much activism is occurring, so it is hard to judge if Lee was missing out on activists opportunities. Nonetheless, this quote indicates how Lee relies on her connection to others to be informed about advocacy and allyship.

**Raja's story.** During the #Defend DACA rally, I observed Raja Feeling Connected. For example, early in the morning, Raja’s partner gave Raja a cup of coffee and said: “I’m proud of you.” I asked Raja's partner how he was doing and he replied, “I feel like my role here today is to support Raja.” A group of about ten friends also supported Raja throughout the entire day. I witness countless hugs and laughs between Raja and her friends. Raja’s family also supported her throughout the day. Additionally, Raja also developed a sense of connection with an older organizer, Abba [pseudonym], who mentored Raja as she planned her first rally.

Raja explained that at the moment her and Kayla were feeling overwhelmed with organizing, they found Abba:

And, so, at that point, it was very much like, very stressful. But, then, we found someone. We found Abba. He was super helpful … It was still stressful but at least we felt like we had someone who kind of knew what they were doing. Otherwise, it was just me and Kayla. He was very helpful. And, he was very much like—he connected us with resources and he also helped us. There were certain things we had to do that we would not have known about.

At the time of writing this manuscript, Raja continued her relationship with Abba.
Experiencing Affirmation

*Experiencing Affirmation* represents the processes in which activists receive external affirmation through accomplishing what they set out to do; receiving recognition, praise, or encouragement; experiencing internal affirmation through faith and personal morals; or gaining energy from activist efforts. *Experiencing Affirmation* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* and *Feeling Connected* and is a condition of *Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship*. Properties of *Experiencing Affirmation* include feeling successful, finding encouragement, and feeling empowered. Dimensions of *Experiencing Affirmation* include experiencing immediate versus delayed affirmation. Figure 16 describes the relationships between *Experiencing Affirmation* and other categories. Figure 17 describes the properties and dimensions of *Experiencing Affirmation*. After explaining the properties and dimensions of *Experiencing Affirmation*, I describe negative instances which suggest that participation in advocacy and allyship dwindles when an activist does not experience any forms of affirmation.

**Properties.** The first property of *Experiencing Affirmation* is feeling successful. LK explained that after she organized protest at a Trump rally, she felt like she had a win:

> I actually helped in organizing a planned disruption of his rally where we set ourselves up every five minutes in different places in the crowd, so that he essentially couldn't get a word in. And that was the point—don't let the hateful get a word in—and so we disrupted him every five minutes. We got escorted out, and he ended up walking offstage like twenty or thirty minutes early. So that was a big event that kept my flames going. … It felt like a win.
When I asked Paula why she continues to participate in advocacy and allyship, she responded:
We have these events when you're talking to people after them, and they're like, 'Oh I never knew that … I had this sustainability event, and some of them are like, 'Oh, I never thought about these things before. Now I'm gonna try and use them and try to tell my friends about them.’ That's the greatest thing. Hearing that you've changed one person and it might have a ripple effect to others. I guess to me that's what keeps me going, because I think if you don't do anything, you can't complain about not being happy with how something's going. If you don't like something, you need to try to change what you dislike.

Paula Experiences Affirmation because other people tell her they are going to change their behavior as a result of Paula’s advocacy and allyship efforts. In a final example of feeling success, Ngozi retold a story about a confrontation she had with a peer while participating in a wilderness-base leadership course.

I really felt, even though we were both a natural leader, we clashed a lot. It was mostly because of different approaches of doing stuff. But part of it just felt like he was always trying to talk over me and stuff like this. He was a white male, and I was just like, I dunno. He could've checked his privilege. And so, I talked to the instructors about it and they were like, ‘We could have a conversation,’ so we kind of sat down and had a conversation about privilege and I explained how certain situations, I just felt like he devalued my opinions and stuff like that. He was just like, ‘Oh, I'm really sorry about that. Like yeah, you're right.’ It was just really positive.

Ngozi’s experience with calling out the privilege of a peer is successful in so far as he admitted that she was right and Ngozi’s recognition that it was “just really positive.” In
many ways, experiencing success offers encouragement to the participant and reinforces the idea that they are *Doing the Right Something*. Encouragement is a second property of *Experiencing Affirmation*.

Activists do not only feel encouraged by having a personal success; they also feel encouraged through finding evidence that things are getting better. Scott provided a good example of feeling encouraged in this way:

Like right, right now for example with DACA or with women's rights or something, when I see millions of people coming together for this one thing and then I see only a couple of thousand or hundred thousand stepping up against it, it gives me hope that we can make change. Because regardless of the fact that we have leaders that don't believe in those same things we do or don't want to listen to the voice of the people. I just feel like the power it's coming through and everybody's human, everybody has love, and everybody's together on this. I feel like those millions of forces together are slowly beating out the sounds of hate.

In another example, Lee explained that she is encouraged because of the national legalization of same-sex marriage:

I feel like somebody will get those benefits of the changes that we're hoping for and fighting for and all that stuff. I hope for a bunch of stuff, but I'm not sure how much of it—I was worried that gay marriage would never happen in my lifetime and it did, and I was just like a mess when it happened, like a good mess. I was driving down the road and I was just like, I couldn't see the road [because she was crying happy tears]. I was just really happy, and I know there's a long ways to go with that but that was a big deal, and that was something that I'd really hoped for and everything, and to see it
happen was relieving and hopeful and encouraging to keep on going with everything that I was doing.

The final property of *Experiencing Affirmation* is feeling empowered. Earlier I explained that Zeitoun found agency through her work with student government and feeling that her voice became relevant. When I asked her how she knew her voice became relevant, she explained, “Because I wasn't put in this position not just because I wanted to be. I was put in this position because people believed I deserve this position.” Zeitoun is empowered because she was elected into a student government role by her peers. All participants in this study felt successful, found encouragement, and felt empowered as part of the *Experiencing Affirmation* process. The timing of *Experiencing Affirmation* does differ for each participant and each action. Many times, participants experienced immediate affirmation because they witnessed a change in the moment or in relatively close proximity to the time of action. Other times, participants experienced affirmation in the future or at least believe that their efforts will have a future impact.

**Dimensions.** Earlier I explain how Paula feels successful because she believes her environmental justice advocacy efforts are creating change. In this example, Paula is experiencing immediate affirmation because she receives feedback from people, such as:

‘Oh I never knew that’ … I had this sustainability event and some of them are like,

‘Oh, I never thought about these things before. Now I'm gonna try and use them and try to tell my friends about them.’

This is happening in the moment and as a result Paula believes she is making a difference. Sandy explained that, more recently, he is taking on a mentoring role that allows him to realize his immediate impact.
I found myself recently taking more of a, I guess, not immediate gratification, but in more roles that allow me to immediately see the impacts of my activism, advocacy, and allyship. And that's been channeled more into mentoring roles. I was a resident mentor last year, which is like an RA but less paperwork. And then this past summer I was an orientation leader, and I've been finding myself more interested in roles where I'm mentoring other people. In that case I do see, like, when you put a drop of food coloring in water and it just goes everywhere. You know what I mean? I see that happening.

In contrast, some activists believe that even though they might not experience immediate change, they are motivated by the belief that their anti-oppression work will have future implications. On the previous page, I shared a quote by Lee, who relayed the idea that the change she is fighting for may not be realized in her lifetime. Lee then shared a worry that she did not feel like same-sex marriage would be legal in her lifetime, but then it was and it made her so happy she was crying and almost had to pull over her car when she found out the news. Lee realized that some of her advocacy and allyship efforts will not always have immediate impact, but she hopes they will have impact in the future. Scott also believes that things are changing and that the efforts of many activist and allies will pay off:

Things are changing. Things are changing, probably not as fast as one might hope.

But with the change that's happening, even though there's increased backlash by those groups that feel extremely strongly against what I'm advocating for or those specific communities. I feel like it's going well, I guess you could say.

In this quote, Scott alludes to the belief that advocacy and allyship of himself and others are paying off despite the slow pace.
Relationships. Because *Experiencing Affirmation* is the last category in my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship, I have already discussed its relationship to all other categories. *Experiencing Affirmation* is a condition of *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* and is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* and *Feeling Connected.*

A reminder of previously discussed relationships. Earlier in the chapter I detailed the mutual relationship between *Experiencing Affirmation* and *Doing the Right Something* (see pp. 176-177) and the mutual relationship between *Experiencing Affirmation* and *Feeling Connected* (see pp. 246-247). *Experiencing Affirmation* is mutually facilitated with *Doing the Right Something* because, through action, an activist experiences affirmation; conversely, experiencing affirmation often fuels action. Similarly, *Feeling Connected* and *Experiencing Affirmation* happen concurrently as activists draw on their connection with others to receive assurance of their social justice values and actions.

In addition to these mutually facilitated relationships, *Experiencing Affirmation* is a condition for *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship.* I explained the nature of this relationship when I demonstrated how *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is a consequence of *Experiencing Affirmation* (see pp. 225-227) In many ways, *Experiencing Affirmation* affirms or crystalizes the opinions which activists are forming as they *Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship.* In the example I detailed earlier, Paula explained a successful experience she had when confronting homophobic views in some of her Black peers. The success, which is a form of affirmation, helped solidify her belief that effective advocacy and allyship is best achieved thorough seeking to understand before being understood.
Negative instances. Like my findings with Feeling Connected, I found evidence that if activists do not Experience Affirmation they may decrease their level of advocacy and allyship. During my interviews, many of my participants explained that they did not participate in a certain type of advocacy and allyship. In many of these cases, participants did not Experience Affirmation specifically as it relates to having or perceiving to have success associated with their efforts. For example, Paula described why she did not attend specific national marches:

There's times where I think people expect me to show up at things and I don't know. They didn't really ask me why, they just expected me to go. There was the Science March and the Women’s March. I didn't go to either of them [because] I guess to me I'm just not been a marching person. I don't really like it outside. It's hot. There's a lot of people going already. So, I guess it's like one of those bystander things where you're like, ‘Other people are going, I don't need to be going to a march.’ And I guess to me it's like, what does the march do? What does my one extra number add to this thing versus if I go volunteer somewhere?

In this example, Paula believes that marching will not have an impact. While this quote also speaks to prioritizing (for example, volunteering vs marching) and matching skills sets (I’m just not the marching type), Paula’s specific comment what does my one extra number add signifies that she does not believe that marching will have a great impact.

In the example below, Ngozi explained why she chooses not to act and why she is not specifically participating in the demonstration and boycott to take down a Confederate statue on her campus:
I think I've definitely gotten tired. Especially last year. When there was just so many shootings. I just definitely remember a point where I just felt really numb to it and like—'cause I was too, like, what can I do? It was just like, I don't even know what to do anymore. Like all these things have happened and like—nothing's working. I mean even right now on campus, like with the [Confederate statue] stuff. Like I would definitely say I'm numb. Just because I feel like—I've waned with regards to that just because there are so many protests. For so long [there have been] protests, talks to meet with the chancellor, the governor, cities. Just all these people, just saying things and like nothing's happened. And right now, I don't know if you've heard about the boycott? …They're organizing this thing called the [university name ommitted] boycott. It's basically like a month of encouraging students to not go to student stores or anything like that. … And I know a lot of people who are really doing it. I have friends who are really doing it and are very passionate about it. ... I just remember seeing that and just being like, ‘I'm done.’ I'm not really doing it. I do it sometimes. I just feel like, I really think I'm done with that issue to a certain extent. When it comes down, I'll be happy. But I don't really see myself doing more to try to make that happen. I just feel like I've done a lot. I don't think it's really in our hands anymore. I feel like if it was about what we felt, like they would've taken it down, but it's not. Like they don't—it's another one of those like ... I feel like they don't care about us.

In this example, Ngozi has lost two the major attributes to *Experiencing Affirmation*. First, she has not experienced success. Ngozi’s explanation that there have already been so many protests regarding the statue and nothing has happened suggest that she does not see any
success or change as a result of advocacy as it relates to this particular issue. Second, Ngozi no longer feels empowered. She exclaims, “I just feel like I’ve done a lot. I don’t think it’s really in our hands anymore.” In our second interview, Ngozi explained that while she continues to participate in advocacy and allyship, she does so in a less tangible way and relies on her faith a bit more:

I don't really think that I can change people's hearts. And I talked about before how my faith really impacts how I go about these things and I think that's a new way, is just honestly even just trusting God to do heart change. That doesn't necessarily mean that I sit back and do nothing. … [I] prioritize or kind of give a lot of weight to the work God will do in someone's heart.

Raja provides my final example in of a lost in affirmation and a decrease in advocacy work

Raja's story. During the #Defend DACA rally, I witnessed several instances in which Raja experienced affirmation. Throughout the day, strangers, close friends, and relatives approached her and said thank you or shared that they were proud of her. Also, during the event, nonparticipants honked, cheered, and clapped in support of the protest. Following the day of the event, many people posted on Facebook words of encouragement and gratitude. However, when I asked Raja if she would organize a rally again, she responded that she might, but not while she is still in school because she needs to focus on other activities that will help her get into a Ph.D. program. When I asked Raja to explain her reasoning, she responded:

Because if I'm going to medical school or something, they might not weigh that as heavily. Which sucks, because, it's something that's really powerful and was really important to me. Like, if I was applying for something like a scholarship [it would be
great], but for graduate school, they'd be like, ‘Yes. This is great.’ But, for straight up PhD, graduate school, or medical school, they care more about GPA and all that kind of stuff.

In this example, Raja demonstrated that she does not believe that her advocacy and allyship efforts would be as valued when applying to Ph.D. programs. Regardless of the accuracy of her statement, Raja's assertion demonstrates that at some level she is looking for external affirmation of her efforts, in this case getting into graduate school. However, Raja does not explain that she will stop her advocacy and allyship altogether. This statement simply suggest that Raja is looking for external affirmation specifically in the form of graduate school acceptance or earning a Ph.D. Her perceived lack of affirmation in this regard has already caused her advocacy/allyship to falter, despite the other forms of affirmations she received.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I presented my participants’ demographics and characteristics, explained some of the challenges with language and how we make meaning of terms, and presented my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship. When presenting my model of advocacy and allyship, I first presented influencing factors, which although not incorporated in the process of advocacy and allyship, most certainly impact and shape the process. I then discussed my core category, *Doing the Right Something*, and its relationship to other categories in my model. I also identified unifying characteristics, which I labeled as properties, and differences, which I labeled as dimensions for each category. Finally, I discussed the relationships between categories by identifying which categories are conditions
for other categories, which ones are consequences, and which categories have a mutually facilitated relationship in which one category does not precede another.

Advocacy and allyship is a continual process in which college student activists consistently return to *Doing the Right Something*. In addition to the continual nature of advocacy and allyship, this process is also evolving. To underscore the importance of the evolving nature of advocacy and allyship, I explained that after *Educating Self* and *Doing the Right Something*, activists experience a depth and growth in their *Awareness* which fuels their return back to advocacy and allyship.
CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I briefly review my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship and discuss how my theory relates to and enhances other theories associated with advocacy and allyship that I discussed in Chapter 2. Specifically, I address the implications from my study on symbolic interactionism, intersectional identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and in-group activist and ally models. After explaining the theoretical implications of my substantive theory, I discuss its practical implications for higher education professionals. Specifically, I address how professors, practitioners, and administrators can use my theory to provide support for students who participate in advocacy and allyship and furthermore encourage more students toward advocacy and allyship. I also address how my theory has pedagogical relevance for graduate-level student affairs programs. Finally, I discuss how administrators can use my theory on advocacy and allyship in their responses to activism on their campuses. I end the chapter by offering opportunities for future research and providing concluding thoughts about the importance of understanding the processes of advocacy and allyship in college students.

Summary of my Substantive Theory

The goal of my research was to explain the process in which students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship. Advocacy refers to acting to end oppression related to a marginalized identity in which a person has membership. Allyship refers to acting to end oppression related to marginalized identities in which a person does not have membership (Patel, 2011). With the intent to produce a broad model that accounts for a wide variety of individual experiences, I used a constructivist grounded theory approach to develop a substantive theory on advocacy and allyship. The visual representation of my model
included influencing factors, a core category, and six additional categories. I also illustrated how categories relate to one another throughout the continual and evolving process of advocacy and allyship.

During the process of advocacy and allyship, a college student activist consistently returns to the core category of *Doing the Right Something*. Unlike other categories in my model, the core category has the greatest explanatory power in the process of advocacy and allyship. *Doing the Right Something* describes how a student, after becoming aware of oppression, motivates to take action against oppression because they believe it is the morally right thing to do. Additionally, *Doing the Right Something* also defines how students work to fight oppression in effective and appropriate ways that they believe will have the greatest likelihood of effecting change and that matches their skills sets and passion. *Doing the Right Something* always includes the properties of action, defining action as a moral necessity to being a compassionate person, and finding congruency between action and the student’s existing skills set.

The other categories in my substantive model include *Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected*, and *Experiencing Affirmation*. *Becoming Aware* is the process by which activists first become conscious of injustices. *Becoming Aware* is always unforeseen and always elicits an emotional response from activists. *Educating Self* is the process by which activists intentionally seek out opportunities and resources to learn about injustice and effective ways to dismantle oppression. In contrast to *Becoming Aware, Educating Self* is first and foremost an intentional process. *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is the process by which activists acquire ideas about how to fight oppression. *Exploring Beliefs*
about Advocacy and Allyship always includes finding agency, gaining vision for change, and relating to marginalized identities in which a person does not share membership. Navigating Different Viewpoints is the process by which activists encounter other people with different and often oppressive beliefs and then decide a course of action or inaction. Navigating Different Viewpoints always includes a period of confusion after an activist first encounters someone who holds significantly different and/or oppressive beliefs.

Feeling Connected and Experiencing Affirmation are essential processes that when disrupted, result in a weakening of advocacy and allyship. Feeling Connected is the process by which college student activists relate to peers, friends, family, or mentors because of their advocacy and allyship. Feeling Connected always consists of identifying an activist role model, experiencing trust, and developing friendship. Experiencing Affirmation is the process by which college student activists receive affirmation that their choices are impactful and morally just. Experiencing Affirmation always results in the college student activist feeling successful, encouraged, and empowered.

I identified the relationship between categories as conditional, consequential, or mutually facilitated. If a category precedes another category, then the first category is a condition for the latter. Conversely, if a category occurs after another category, then it is a consequence. In cases where categories occur concurrently, then they are mutually facilitated with one another.

As illustrated by the relationship of categories, the overall process of advocacy and allyship is continual. Additionally, advocacy and allyship is an evolving process. My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship accounts for this evolving process by illustrating how college student activists increase their awareness as a result of Educating Self and Doing
the Right Something. The increased depth of awareness then encourages their return to advocacy and allyship. Therefore, I illustrate how Becoming Aware is a growth-oriented consequence of Educating Self and Doing the Right Something. Although not included in the actual process, I identified the activist's identity and the sociopolitical climate as influencing factors to the process.

To illustrate these influencing factors, I used the concept of wind to underscore the fluid and atmospheric nature of their presence in advocacy and allyship. Identity and the sociopolitical climate influence the process of advocacy and allyship by often shaping the terms in which activists become exposed to injustice. Furthermore, these influencing factors shape the constructs within which activists work as they try to dismantle oppression. While different for each individual activist and different throughout time, these influencing factors consistently remain in the atmosphere of advocacy and allyship, closely shaping the process. My substantive theory on advocacy and allyship has both theoretical and practical implications.

Implications for Theory

Scholarship on college student activism primarily focuses on the history of activism (Broadhurst, 2014; Curtin & McGarty, 2016; Ellsworth & Burns, 2009; Rhoads, 1998) administrators’ response to activism (Barnhardt, 2012; Biddix et al., 2009; Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Martin, 2014); predictive characteristics of activism (Block, Haan, & Smith 1969; Hope et al., 2016; Rhoads, 1997; Sutherland, 1981); and the link between political activity in college on civic engagement outcomes later in life (Henderson & Chatfield, 2011; Mayer, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). To date, few scholars have attempted to understand the process through which college students participate in activism. Scholarship
that does discuss the process of student activism, particularly as it relates to challenging oppressive structures that marginalized populations face, primarily resulted in the development of ally models (Broido, 1997, 2000; Reason et al., 2005; Washington & Evans, 1991). Implicitly or explicitly, these models assume that allies hold all privileged identities and do not take into account the complexities of intersectional and solidarity allyship. Some higher education scholars have produced in-group college student activism models (Cummings, 2014; Renn, 2007); however, similar to ally development models, these studies treat privileged and marginalized identities as two distinct silos and do not address the ways in which these identities intersect. Furthermore, these studies do not attempt to explain the overarching process of advocacy and allyship.

No empirical studies to date address the process by which students take part in advocacy for their own marginalized communities and allyship for other communities in which they do not share membership. Through constructivist grounded theory methods, I addressed the question of how students commit to and engage in both advocacy and allyship. By illuminating the overarching process of both advocacy and allyship in college students, my substantive theory significantly contributes to the literature of college student activism that until now has primarily focused on the product of, and not on the development of, this process. My theory has specific implications for symbolic interactionism, intersectional identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and existing in-group activist and ally development models.

**Symbolic Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism served as my theoretical orientation. Initially, it encouraged me to focus on the meaning behind my participants’ actions and words when analyzing my
data. Symbolic interactionism describes how individuals are both influenced by and influential in developing societal norms (Blumer, 1969; Morris, 1934; Miller, 1982). In many ways, my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship is congruent with the idea that individuals and the collective society have a mutual influencing relationship.

The sociopolitical climate acts as an influencing factor that shapes the norms of advocacy and allyship. Specific to college student activists in this study, the swelling momentum of Black Lives Matter and other national movements coupled with the election of Trump provoked what college activists are fighting for and fighting against when taking part in advocacy and allyship. Conversely, the collective voice that college students have in their advocacy and allyship can and does influence social norms. When reviewing the history of college student activism, it is easy to identify how activist movements that began on college campuses influenced a change in societal norms. For example, the 1960s Civil Rights movement on college campuses resulted in the changing norm of a racially segregated society into a more integrated American society (Broadhurst, 2012; Sandage, 1993).

When applying the central idea of the mutual relationship between the individual and society in symbolic interactionism to the substantive theory on advocacy and allyship, the theoretical possibility of liberation emerges. Advocacy and allyship is meant to disrupt the status quo of society in which systemic and non-accidental forces maintain oppressive structures (Freire, 1970; Frye 1983). Symbolic interactionism explains how individuals can influence society through their collective voices (Blumer, 1969). By understanding the process in which college students commit to and take part in advocacy and allyship, there is opportunity to encourage mass involvement in advocacy and allyship that in return could lead to college graduates that will remain committed towards achieving a liberated society.
Freire (1970) argued that the existence of oppression does not have to be an accepted reality or a condition of society. More college students committed to dismantling oppression via participating both in advocacy and allyship makes liberation for all people a stronger possibility.

**Intersectional Identity Development**

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship also offers theoretical implications for the growing body of literature on intersectional identity development by adding a component of activism in relation to identity development. Claros, Garcia, Johnston-Guerrero and Mata (2017) explained that intersectionality "helps us consider the structures and systems that intersect, highlighting differences in lived experiences based on the multiple identities of individuals and how those differences manifest in group disparities" (p. 46). Dill and Zambrano (2009) argued that intersectionality, while initially a framework to understand the multiplied and interwoven experience, rather than additive experiences, of Black women, it has grown into a useful lens to understand both the interwoven nature of all social identities as well as the complex interwoven nature of systems of oppression.

When taking part in advocacy and allyship, college students are simultaneously making meaning of their own intersecting identities. In her foundational work on multiple identities, Jones (1995) wrestled with an idea to include a prism of privilege in her model. This prism explained why their marginalized identities had more saliency for her participants, compared to their privileged identities. Jones hypothesized that a prism of privilege reflected privileged identities but did not reflect marginalized identities, thus preventing privileged identities from entering the consciousness of college students (Jones &
Abes, 2013). Although Jones did not include the prism in her final model, my research supports the ideas and concepts of her prism of privilege.

Most of the activists in this study Became Aware of the reality of injustice because of their marginalized identity and not because of their privileged identity. This is congruent with Jones’s (1995) earlier concept of the prism of privilege because for most of my participants, their awareness of injustice occurred from a place of marginalization rather than privilege. Experiencing oppression initially led to marginalized identities becoming more salient for activists in this study. However, by participating in advocacy and allyship, activists adopt the language of intersectionality and all students alluded to the relationship of their identities in their advocacy and allyship efforts.

A substantive theory of advocacy and allyship adds depth to the growing body of literature on intersectional identity development. This theory illuminates the ways in which participation in advocacy and allyship result in an increase of consciousness toward one’s own intersecting identities. Torres, Jones and Renn (2009) explained how “intersectionality makes way for the examination of both privilege and oppressed identities and acknowledges the possibility of individuals inhabiting both” (p. 589). Similarly, participating in both advocacy and allyship as a product of Doing the Right Something allows space for students to not only acknowledge their privileged and marginalized identities, but also to begin to understand the implication of these identities through a collective effort to fight oppression.

Critical Consciousness Theory

Stemming from Freire's (1970) seminal work Pedagogy of the Oppressed, “Critical consciousness describes how oppressed and marginalized people learn to critically analyze their social condition and act to change them” (Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011, p. 44). My
substantive theory on advocacy and allyship extends Critical Consciousness Theory in three ways. First, my theory expands the foundation of Critical Consciousness Theory to include the processes in which marginalized people learn to critically analyze the social conditions of other marginalized groups in which they do not share membership. Second, a theory of advocacy and allyship bridges the link between critical reflection and action. Finally, my theory on advocacy and allyship, moves beyond a linear explanation of awareness and action and provides spaces for a more complex understanding of this process.

My theory extends the process of developing a critical consciousness by describing how marginalized populations begin to understand their own social conditions and act to change them. In addition, my theory also describes how marginalized populations begin to understand the relationship of their own social conditions to the social conditions that other marginalized groups face. As captured in the categories *Becoming Aware* and *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*, college student activists are increasingly becoming aware of interlocking systems of oppression and Exploring Beliefs that while there are particularities and nuances to specific groups fight for liberation there is also a need for a unifying effort to fighting oppression. In the field of higher education, scholars advocate that it is the responsibility of social-justice minded professionals to develop intersectional programming that not only addresses intersecting identity development but also interlocking oppressive structures and systems (Claros, Garcia, Johnston-Guerrero & Mata, 2017; Taylor 2017).

Through relating to other marginalized populations, college student activists begin to understand not only the unjust social conditions that they face because of their membership in a marginalized group, but also the unjust social conditions that other marginalized groups
face. Consequently, their awakening to these social conditions through becoming aware of these issues is more complex and intersectional. Additionally, a substantive theory on advocacy and allyship illuminates the link between critical reflection and critical action.

Building on the foundational work of Freire (1970), Watts et al. (2011) identified three components of Critical Consciousness: reflection, political efficacy, and critical action. My substantive theory on advocacy and allyship encompasses each component that Watts et al. (2011) identified. For example, *Becoming Aware* and *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* align with the concept of *reflection*, which is defined as the process in which an individual becomes aware of injustice and subsequently rejects societal inequities. *Doing the Right Something* aligns with the concept of *critical action*, which is defined as the process in which an individual takes action to fight societal oppression. *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*, specifically the property of finding agency, is closely aligned with the concept of *political efficacy*, which is the process in which an individual perceives their capacity to make change. My substantive model of advocacy and allyship also includes more properties that connect reflection (*Becoming Aware*) and action (*Doing the Right Something*). Specifically, *Experiencing Affirmation* and *Feeling Connected* are critical links between reflection and action.

Interestingly, Diemer and Rapa (2016) applied the Watts et al. (2011) concepts of critical consciousness and did not find evidence that political efficacy bridges the gap between reflection and action. Their findings suggest that *political efficacy* alone may not be the sole linchpin that connects reflection to action. By adding categories of *Feeling Connected* and *Experiencing Affirmation*, my substantive model of advocacy and allyship suggests that the link between reflection and action is more complicated than simply
believing that one's action will make a difference. Although political efficacy is a vital part of the process, experiencing trust through *Feeling Connected*, as well as finding encouragement, success, and empowerment through *Experiencing Affirmation*, appear to be just as important as political efficacy.

Furthermore, Critical Consciousness Theory advocates often present Critical Consciousness development as a linear path: critical reflection plus political efficacy leads to critical action. (Diemer & Rapa 2016; Diemer et al., 2015; Hershberg, Johnson, DeSouza, Hunter, & Zaff, 2015). In contrast, my substantive model of advocacy and allyship suggests that *Doing the Right Something* (critical action) is a nonlinear, continual and evolving process. One of the salient concepts of my participants’ own activism journey metaphors (Appendix L) is that their activism is continually changing and evolving, which is supported by additional interview and observational data. By moving beyond a linear explanation of aligning values and action, my theory accounts for the complexities in advocacy and allyship. I include components of efficacy in my model; however, I demonstrate through the relationship of my categories that movement from awareness to action is rarely linear.

**In-group Activism and Ally Development**

The last specific theoretical implication of my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship relates to current in-group activism models and ally models. My theory on advocacy and allyship progresses both in-group activism and ally models and suggests avenues for an intersectional approach toward understanding advocacy and allyship in college students. I approached my research by acknowledging intersectionality of both identity and systemic oppression because I explicitly recruited participants who hold both privileged and
marginalized identities and who take action to fight oppression for groups in which they share membership and for groups in which they do not,

In Chapter Two, I explained that few empirical studies and theories relating to in-group activism of college students exist. In my extensive review of the literature, I only came across two empirical studies (Cross, 1978; Renn, 2007) and one dissertation research (Cummings, 2014) that explicitly addressed in-group activism development. Cross’s (1978) Black Racial Identity Development Model and Renn’s (2007) research on LGBTQ advocacy lightly address the process in which marginalized populations engage in advocacy. The final stage of Cross’s Black Racial Identity Development Model, *Internalization-Commitment*, suggest that a person with a mature understanding of their Black racial identity actively works to solve problems of racial inequalities. Renn (2007) found evidence that LGBTQ student leaders and activists have experiences that incite their involvement to join or form an LGBTQ student group. After joining a group, LGBTQ student leaders and activists participate in cycles of increased involvement, which in return promote a deeper understanding of LGBTQ identity and issues.

While both models illuminate aspects of becoming an advocate for one’s own marginalized community, they do not fully explain why and how students from marginalized backgrounds commit to and engage in advocacy. My substantive theory on advocacy and allyship elucidates this process in greater detail and fills in the gap in literature, which does not sufficiently discuss how students with one or more marginalized identities come to advocate for their own liberation. Similarly, a substantive theory on advocacy and allyship explicates the process of ally development in greater detail.
Up until this point, ally development models primarily focused on the definition of allyship and not the process itself. Furthermore, most ally models are not associated with empirical research but rather are derived from a deep understanding of several theories related to allyship (e.g., Edwards, 2006; Evans et al., 2005; Reason et al., 2005; Washington & Evans, 1991). To date, Broido’s (1997, 2000) dissertation study on social justice allies is the only empirical and holistic study of ally development in college students. My theory, based on the experiences of my participants, provides more explanatory power in understanding not just what allyship is but how college students participate in it.

Despite not deriving from empirical evidence, Washington and Evans’ (1991) heterosexual ally development model most closely aligns with my substantive theory of advocacy and allyship. Washington and Evans explain four basic levels of being an ally to the LGBTQ community: awareness, knowledge/education, skills, and action. The processes of Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, and Doing the Right Something are congruent with these four levels. However, Washington and Evans’ presentation of levels suggest a hierarchal and linear structure to being an ally. The first level of allyship is awareness and the last is action. In contrast, my theory suggests that allyship is more of a process in which activists moves back and forth between Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship, and Doing the Right Something. Additionally, my substantive theory includes the processes of Navigating Different Viewpoints, Experiencing Affirmation and Feeling Connected, which elaborate on factors that encourage students to continually revisit and uphold their commit to taking action to fight injustice.
Finally, my theory progresses Broido’s (2000) schematic of social justice allies. Broido concluded that social justice allies enter college with a predisposition toward egalitarian values, evolve their egalitarian values to social justice values because of their experiences in college, and then progress toward ally behavior because of their increased clarification and confidence in their knowledge of social justice issues and how to fight injustices. Broido also explains that there is an element of chance and purposeful recruitment by friends, faculty, and staff that influences ally behavior. In many ways, my substantive theory complements and expands on Broido Social Justice Ally model.

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship furthers Broido’s (2000) schematic by illuminating the process of allyship, rather than simply describing events and individual characteristics that lead to ally behavior. Furthermore, Broido’s model is one directional with various experiences leading to the culmination of allyship behavior. My theory explains how ally behaviors are not one-time events but are continual and evolving. Consequently, activists continually return to and redefine *Doing the Right Something*.

My model applies not only to advocacy behavior nor only to ally behavior. My theory illuminates a process in which college students commit to and engage in *both* advocacy and allyship. This encourages a more intersectional approach toward supporting and encouraging student activism. Lorde (2012) explains “there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issues lives… Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone. We are not perfect, but we are stronger and wiser than the sum of our errors” (p. 138). My theory of advocacy and allyship offers room for intersectional activism by recognizing the processes in which marginalized individuals fight injustice related to their own identity and injustices related to other identities. Doetsch-Kidder (2012) defined
intersectional activism as "activism that addresses more than one structure of oppression or form of discrimination" (p. 3). An understanding of the process of advocacy and allyship provides insights for higher education professionals as they support students and the growing advocacy and allyship on college campuses.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

College student activism related to advocacy and allyship is both prevalent and widespread throughout the American higher education landscape (Dupree, 2017; The Demands, 2016 Smith, C., 2015). Furthermore, UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute’s Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) first year survey predicts that student activism will rise. In the introduction of this research, I highlighted how according to CIRP’s final report, 8.5% of first year students in 2015 indicated they had a “very good chance” of participating in student protest. This is the highest level of predictive protest since 1967 when CIRP first inquired about student protest (Eagan et al., 2015, pp.7-8). Accompanying the rise of student activism is the professional responsibility to understand this phenomenon and to encourage students toward finding constructive avenues for exercising their agency. Jacoby (2017), in an addendum to her feature article in NASPA’s Journal of College and Character, explains that since the election of Trump and the subsequent surge of protest on college campuses, “our [student affairs professionals] roles as supporters of student activists are more important than ever” (p. 1). I agree with Jacoby and outline below how various stakeholders in higher education can use my theory in their efforts to support student activism.

The cornerstone of quality substantive theory generated through constructivist grounded theory methods is producing a theory with practical utility (Charmaz, 2014;
Corbin, 1997; Silverman & Patterson, 2014). To understand and elaborate on the utility of my substantive theory for advocacy and allyship, I conducted practitioner checks in which I asked student affairs professionals to determine the degree to which my theory was or was not congruent with their experiences surrounding student activism. In addition, I explicitly asked practitioners to elaborate on whether and how they found my theory to be useful. Based on their feedback, my own experiences supporting college student activists, and a review of the literature on student activism, I identify four areas where my theory can support best practices for student affairs professionals who desire to create campus climates where students are encouraged and supported in their efforts to fight oppression.

First, my theory offers guidance for student affairs professionals who often mentor students through their advocacy and allyship. Second, higher education professionals can use my theory to encourage more students to participate in advocacy and allyship. Third, my theory informs graduate student affairs programs as they try and prepare future higher education professionals to address activism on campus. Finally, my theory offers guidance to upper administrators on college campuses who want to set up structural support that encourages, rather than dissuades, students as they take part in advocacy and allyship.

Supporting Students in Advocacy and Allyship

My review of higher education literature reveals that while some scholars have studied institutional support or lack thereof (Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016), no studies exist that discuss supporting advocacy and allyship at the individual level. One of the major implications of my theory is that it illuminates the process of advocacy and allyship that practitioners and professors can use when they act as mentors to student activists. In their empirical study of the role of student affairs professionals
through 1950s to the 1970s, Gaston-Gayles, Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, Ward, and Tuttle (2005) found that during the Civil Rights era, student affairs professionals "took on roles such as educator, advocate, mediator, initiator and change agent in order to effectively and efficiently resolve issues that arose on their campuses as a result of the Civil Rights era and the student protest movement" (p. 263). Today, student affairs professionals still find themselves in positions where they must navigate their support for students engaging in advocacy and allyship. My theory undergirds the importance of supporting the powerful emotions that students feel when they take part in advocacy and allyship.

Jacoby (2017) poses several questions to professionals in higher education: *How do we help students think more complexly about their issues? How do we help students see themselves as problem solvers, not problem identifiers? How do we help students select the most effective strategy to accomplish their goals? And how do we create brave spaces on campus for expression and discussion of conflicting views?* I would like to add one more question to Jacoby's list: *How do we provide appropriate support for student activists as they embark on their journey of advocacy and allyship?* A salient property in *Becoming Aware* of oppression is the concept that this process elicits an emotional response.

Every participant in my study related some feeling of anger, sadness, fury, or confusion as they became aware of oppression and began to try and fight it. Many scholars have examined the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship between professional higher education staff and students (e.g., Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012; Crisp & Cruz, 2009). My research suggests that during their advocacy and allyship processes, college students often seek out mentorship either from faculty members or student affairs professionals.
A property of *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* is having an activist role model. Many activists in this study shared that their mentor was somehow affiliated with the university they attended. I learned from practitioner checks and from my interviews that many higher education professionals and professors find themselves supporting students who are taking part in advocacy and allyship. I offer an example below to further elaborate on the supportive role higher education professionals find themselves when interacting with students who engage in advocacy and allyship.

During my second interview with Jacob, he explained to me that he was tired because he spent upwards of three hours the night before speaking with the director of the LGBTQ Center. Previously that week, Jacob engaged in queer advocacy by hosting an educational event on homophobia to bring attention to microaggression in his residence hall that he and other queer people face. This event did not go well in Jacob’s mind because it was not well attended and because his peers posted on Facebook that Jacob was stirring up trouble and practicing ‘reverse discrimination’ against heterosexuals. Jacob was visibly upset as he was sharing this story with me and it was clear that he was still making meaning of the events that unfolded in his residence hall. While I do not know what the director of the LGBTQ center said to Jacob, the director did support Jacob through the emotions that his advocacy in the residence hall stirred up for him. By our morning interview, Jacob was able to articulate both his frustrations and a better understanding of the events.

Although often not trained therapists, student affairs professionals and undergraduate professors should be prepared to support students' emotional responses like those of Jacob and not discourage these emotions. Specific suggestions for student affairs professional include validating the student emotions, allowing space for silence and allowing space for the
student to fully feel the emotions that advocacy and allyship stir up, and by attending continuing education opportunities that provide tools to understand the difference between when a student is processing emotion and when the student is in crisis. In order to help guide professionals, ACPA and NASPA could consider adding counseling to their list of competency areas for the profession.

Having an emotional response to Becoming Aware is both a normal and perhaps a necessary reaction that fuels a person's desire to both Educate Themselves and Do the Right Something. Several scholars have paid attention to understanding emotions such as guilt and shame associated with becoming aware of privilege (Chan, Cor, & Band 2018; Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007; Schmitt, Behner, Montada, Müller & Müller-Fohrbrodt, 2000). However, it is just as likely that in the process of Becoming Aware, students who hold intersecting marginalized and privileged identities will also have feelings of anger, sadness, and confusion as they increase their understanding of systemic oppression they face as a result of their marginalized identities. Higher education professionals should be prepared for these responses and be present with students as they experience them.

In addition to being prepared for this response, mentors should remember the importance of Experiencing Affirmation when students share their frustrations from their advocacy and allyship work. In the example above, although still upset, Jacob explained to me the importance of baby steps. Regardless of the merits or effectiveness that baby steps have in creating change, Jacob's use of this terms indicates that he is making meaning of his interaction with his peers in the residence hall by affirming his role in slowly but surely creating change. It is reasonable to assume Jacob’s conversation with the director helped him shift from thinking that his advocacy is pointless to thinking that his advocacy is making
a difference through baby steps. This intervention of the director may have helped Jacob to still be motivated in his fight for queer equality.

Properties of *Experiencing Affirmation* include feeling successful, encouraged and empowered. Student affairs professionals and undergraduate professors, by the nature of their mentorship, can help reframe challenging experiences that students face in their advocacy and allyship so that students feel their actions are valuable rather than pointless. In their recent study on adolescent civic engagement and economical, physical, and mental health outcomes later in life, Ballard, Hoyt, and Pachuki (2018) found that in addition to positive benefits such as higher educational attainment, young people who participated in advocacy and allyship had higher rates of negative behaviors such as using drugs or binge drinking later in life. Ballard et al. suggest that perhaps the reason for this correlation is partially due to the stress and sadness that often accompanies diving deep into issues of oppression. The authors suggest that one way to mitigate this negative effect is to help students understand and celebrate small victories and the specific role they play in small victories.

Because of their mentorship roles, higher education professionals are poised to help students make meaning of the inevitable challenges anti-oppression work and can help students understand just how *big* and small a win actually is. Although policies such as at-will employment for student affairs professionals and job insecurity for non-tenure track professionals pose a significant challenge for professionals to visibly and outwardly support activist efforts, professionals still possess the power to support each individual student activist as a person. Specifically, higher education professionals should strive to validate and, when appropriate, relate to the feelings and actions of students who are engaged in
advocacy and allyship and provide them with affirmation that their efforts are worthwhile regardless of the slow pace of change.

**Encouraging More Students toward Advocacy and Allyship**

Scholars have long argued that student activism is both a vehicle to create change in society as well as a vehicle for students to learn about democracy, citizenship, and leadership (Kezar, 2010). Furthermore, "preparing students for a mature participation in the civic life of a democracy is consistently cited as a primary purpose of higher education" (Hamrick, 1998, p. 449). By underscoring the process in which students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship, my theory helps inform higher education professionals about the experience of college student activism. In return, higher education professionals may use this information to encourage more students toward advocacy and allyship, which can increase mature participation in American civic and democratic society. Specifically, an understanding of the process in which students *Develop Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship* through gaining a vision for change and the importance of *Feeling Connected* and *Experiencing Affirmation* is useful when trying to encourage more students toward advocacy and allyship.

Feeling overwhelmed, specifically because of not knowing what to do, is a normal response when *Becoming Aware* of and then trying to confront oppressive systems. Many social justice educators wrestle with how to encourage students to act once they become aware of individual prejudice, discrimination, and systemic oppression (Adams & Bell, 2016). Despite the challenge in channeling students' awareness of injustice toward understanding how they can make a change, my theory suggests that gaining a clear vision for change is vital.
For example, in Chapter Four I explained how Zeitoun remembered sitting in her library, crying because she did not know what to do about the Islamophobia and the bullying situation in her school. However, at some point Zeitoun developed a belief that through media and the power of the American Civil Liberties Union and NAACP, she can put pressure on institutions to adopt policies and programs to combat Islamophobia. Consequently, in her collegiate career, Zeitoun is active in her student government and uses her positionality to put pressure on administrators to make institutional changes. The degree of effectiveness of this strategy is not the primary concern of my theory. What is important is that my theory suggests that having a clear vision for change, which occurs when an activist is *Exploring Beliefs about Advocacy and Allyship*, is an incredibly valuable step that leads toward encouraging action.

In her foundational book, *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Tatum (1997) explains the importance of understanding one's own sphere of influence which helps illuminate where a person can act to create positive change. Twenty years later, Tatum readdresses and highlights the importance of understanding our sphere of influence. Tatum (2017) writes, "the fact is that we all have a sphere of influence, some domain in which we exercise some level of power and control. The task for each of us… is to identify what our sphere of influence is (however large or small) and to consider how it might be used to interrupt the cycle of racism" (p. 199).

Combining my theory of advocacy and allyship with Tatum's emphasis of sphere of influence, higher education professionals can help students who understand and acknowledge the reality of systemic oppression but do not know how to act on this information. When higher education professionals identify that their students are starting to *Develop Beliefs*
about Advocacy and Allyship, they should encourage them to understand their sphere of influence and then proceed to help students create a vision for change in this sphere. Helping students identify their sphere of influence may be challenging, especially if professionals have not engaged in identifying their own sphere of influence. Nonetheless, helping students to identify their sphere or guide them toward activist groups within or outside of the university can help students focus and deepen their commitment.

Additionally, my theory of advocacy and allyship informs higher education professionals of the importance that Feeling Connected and Experiencing Affirmation have in maintaining involvement in advocacy and allyship. My theory of advocacy and allyship suggests that when students lose their feeling of connection to others or do not experience affirmation, they begin to retreat from their activist efforts. The importance of Feeling Connected is congruent with current literature on a college student’s sense of belonging. A large amount of foundational scholarship in the field of higher education addresses the connection between college students’ sense of belonging and their level of persistence and matriculation to graduation (Astin, 1993 Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Tinto, 1987, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). A consistent finding in this scholarship is that "integrating experiences of involvement, engagement and affiliations are central to student development and progress in college" (Hurtado & Carter, p. 324). At the most basic level, a sense of belonging serves to motivate sustained involvement in a person's pursuits such as attending college (Strayhorn, 2012). The findings of my study are congruent with the conventional knowledge that a sense of belonging significantly helps with persisting in efforts.
For many participants in my study, their engagement in advocacy and allyship directly relates to feeling connected to peers and mentors. Several empirical studies link quality peer and faculty relationships and discuss how this relationship significantly add to a student's overall sense of belonging (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow & Salomone, 2002; Morrow & Ackerman; 2012; Strayhorn, 2012). Similarly, my research suggests that quality relationships with peers who are also engaged in advocacy and allyship as well as with activist role models are vital to feeling connected throughout their activist efforts. When encouraging more students to take part in advocacy and allyship, student affairs professionals should strive to remember the importance of feeling connected and facilitate intentional situations to grow this connection for the group of students with whom they interact.

Similarly, higher education professionals should intentionally work toward providing external affirmation for their students as well as encourage students to find internal affirmation in their advocacy and allyship. The importance in providing affirmation for students as they commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship is congruent with Kezar’s (2010) empirical study of the relationship between grassroots student leaders and faculty and staff. Kezar (2010) argued that the main contributions higher education professionals make towards empowering grassroots leaders are the "everyday, common, and humble ways that these groups work to create change on an ongoing basis" (p. 450). In a previous example, the director of the LGBTQ center helped Jacob find success in the 'baby steps' of his advocacy efforts. While it is important not to shy away from the gravity of systemic oppression, higher education professionals must call attention toward the power of small wins in order to encourage more students toward advocacy and allyship. If this does not occur, students may
not see the value in participating in advocacy and allyship and consequently choose not to participate in it at all. In addition to having implications for supporting and encouraging students toward advocacy and allyship, my theory has pedagogical implications for higher education graduate programs that seek to equip future student affairs professionals with the skills and knowledge to succeed as higher education professionals.

**Pedagogical Implications for Preparing the Student Affairs Professional**

By understanding the process of advocacy and allyship, higher education graduate professors can equip future student affairs professionals with the resources and knowledge they need to address student activist reactions and frustrations. My theory on advocacy and allyship provides graduate professors language and definitions to understand the process of advocacy and allyship in college students. Furthermore, graduate school programs can better prepare future student affairs professionals to respond to their students in ways that encourage more advocacy and allyship, rather than dissuade their efforts. Ropers-Huilman, Carwile, and Barnett (2005) interviewed twenty-six college student activists and found that activists perceive administrators as "gatekeepers, antagonists, supporters; and absentee leaders" (p.295). Furthermore, Ropers-Huilman et al. argued that activists often have a limited understanding of the roles of administrators, which leads them to believe that administrators can *fix* inequities. Although there may always be a disconnect between how student perceive administrators and the actual job of administrators, as mentioned several times throughout this paper, college student activism appears to have staying power within the higher education system. Consequently, it is important for future higher education professionals to be prepared to address activism on their campuses.
According to NASPA graduate program directory, more than 370 institutions of higher education offer some sort of graduate program related to the field of student affairs (NASPA, n.d.). In their comprehensive review of the student affairs preparedness literature, Lovell and Kosten (2000) concluded that student affairs professionals need to have skills such as "administration, management, and human facilitation; knowledge of student development theory and functional responsibilities; and traits of person integrity and cooperation [and] technology, assessment, political skills, and postsecondary public policy knowledge" (p. 553). In the eighteen years since Lovell and Kosten (2000) published their comprehensive work on student affairs competencies, many scholars have argued that in addition to the skills set forth by Lovell and Kosten, student affairs professionals need to have both counseling-like skills as well as social justice skills (ACPA & NASPA, 2010, 2015; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). In ACPA & NASPA's 2015 updated Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators, the competency of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion changed to Social Justice and Inclusion competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, pp. 30-31).

Despite the recognition of the importance in social justice competency for the student affairs professional, there are a lot of challenges for the profession to fully embrace this concept. One of the more perplexing realities of student affairs professionals and their role in fighting oppression and helping their students fight oppression is they often do not have the positionality to do so. In her review of the relationship between faculty and staff and grassroots college student organizers, Kezar (2010) concluded that:
Faculty and staff often noted that students can act in more overt ways and engage in strategies that faculty and staff leaders cannot. Because faculty and staff are part of the institution, they risk their jobs if they push too hard for changes. (p. 470)

While positionality certainly possesses a huge challenge for administrators, my research suggests that student affairs professionals are often on the front lines in supporting students who engage in advocacy and allyship.

My theory suggests that students, especially as they gravitate toward *Doing the Right Something*, can become frustrated and overwhelmed with the realities of injustices. This begs the question: *Are graduate student affairs programs equipping future professionals with the skill set necessary to juggle both their professional and ethical responsibilities to encourage students to challenge oppressive systems within their ability to keep their jobs?*

During our interviews, LK expressed her frustration with both the chancellor and who she calls "his posse" after she was invited to take part in a chancellor round table about diversity and inclusion efforts on campus. She felt that the chancellor dismissed her concerns around the university’s lack of response to the Dakota Pipeline, parking concerns, and the response to racist remarks on Snapchat that occurred in a group text between all members of a first-year residence halls. Ultimately, LK decided to quit the chancellor’s round table.

LK’s situation is not unique and many undergraduate students engaged with advocacy and allyship continue to look toward administrators to fix or at the very least respond to injustices and systemic oppression regardless of their actual power to do so (Spade, 2017; Stoller, 2016). Student affairs graduate programs should equip professionals for this conversation and address the challenges associated with keeping a job while personally challenging institutionalized and systemic oppression, or at the very least supporting students
who do. Specifically, student affairs graduate programs should focus attention on preparing
student affairs professionals to have conversations with and occupy spaces where students
are far beyond accepting their privilege and are frustrated, angry and overwhelmed with the
realities of injustice. Second, student affairs graduate programs should prepare students
affairs professionals to support students as they Navigate Different Viewpoints.

Relative to focusing on the impact that oppression has on a student's marginalized
identities, student affairs literature and graduate programs pedagogy has focused a lot more
attention on how to help students progress through feelings of guilt and defensiveness
associated with privileged identities (Adams & Bell, 2016; Dunlap et al., 2007; Johnson,
2006; McIntosh, 1990; Watt, 2007). Helping students process privilege is certainly an
important competency of student affairs professionals; however, helping students through
periods of anger, anxiety and frustration as they realize the role of oppression in their lives is
an equally important competency. My theory of advocacy and allyship illustrates this
process and illustrates how activists experience emotion when Becoming Aware of
oppression. To support students through periods of anger, anxiety and frustration, student
affairs professionals should relate to students when appropriate, validate their feelings, help
students identify their spheres of influence, and show a genuine concern for the realities that
oppressed individuals face. In addition to supporting students as they become aware of their
own oppression, student affairs professionals are often in spaces where they must facilitate
conversations between students who have significantly different viewpoints.

Learning how to manage students’ initial and genuine confusion that accompanies
encountering someone who holds significantly different perspectives is a concept of
particular importance in Navigating Different Viewpoints. I want to be clear that I am not
advocating for student affairs professionals to easily explain away problematic and oppressive viewpoints as simply "different." Rather, I am advocating that student affairs programs should help prepare future professionals to have conversations that help students Navigate Different Viewpoints and help them understand how to proceed when they inevitably meet a person who holds different and often problematic beliefs. Dialoguing is one of the greatest strategies for helping progress a constructive conversation between people who hold different viewpoints (Nagda & Gurin 2007; Tannen, 2012). The National Coalition Building Institute provides great training for higher education professional and students interested in progressing challenging conversations (NCBI, n.d.). Closely related to the pedagogical implications for student affairs programs are the structural implications of my theory, which helps administrators respond to student activism.

Informing Structural Responses to Student Activism

The last implication of my study concerns the way in which it can inform institutional and structural responses to advocacy and allyship. As I discussed previously in this chapter and in others, administrators within institutions of higher education have in many ways progressed from perceiving student activism in a negative light and as something that they needed to control to viewing activism as a positive contribution to the development of civic engagement skills (Broadhurst & Martin, 2014). Nonetheless, the degree of competency in responding to student activists varies and often administrators fall short when it comes to supporting advocacy and allyship on their campuses (Broadhurst & Martin 2014; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016). Administrators can use my theory of advocacy and allyship to understand and create structural support for student activists rather than inadvertently diminish their efforts.
Educating Self is integral to the process of advocacy and allyship and is a process in which activists intentionally seek out more information about injustice and effective ways to fight it. Structurally, institutions should explore expanding spaces where students can not only learn about systemic oppression, but also learn about effective ways to fight it. Many students in this study explained that they learned about social justice through personal research on the internet. In an effort to meet students where they are at, an innovative idea is to develop more of a web presence pertaining to social justice education. When incidences of bias occur on campus or in the country at large, institutions could explore including web links at the end of their statements of support for diversity and inclusion so that students could click on it to get more information about any given topic.

For example, in the current climate and debate about DACA, many institutions put out a letter of support for DREAMers, commenting that the institution valued the contributions DREAMers had to their schools. In addition to these statements of support, my theory-supported suggestion is to add links to the original DACA legislation, the Secretary of Homeland Security memo to rescind the program, and the United States Homeland Security's DACA website. This added information, which are simply facts associated with the debate, can help more students gain a depth of understanding of the issue, which can in return help them better understand how to use their agency to advocate for policy change. In addition to providing additional information in letters of support, institutions should explore structural changes such as the suggestion above that can facilitate an increase in knowledge about injustice and oppression.

Scholars, administrators, and professors continue to debate the merits of requiring mandatory diversity or social justice classes (Bell, Connerley & Cocchiara, 2009; Krings,
Austic, Gutiérrez, & Dirksen, 2015; Mayhew et al. 2016; Parker, Barnhardt, Pascarella &McCowin). Flaherty (2016) explains how proponents of mandatory diversity or social justice courses point to empirical studies that associated classroom and outside of classroom diversity experiences to gains in civic outcomes, while opponents of mandatory diversity or social justice courses claim that required diversity courses are inappropriate because a universal definition of diversity does not exist, diversity courses are not rigorous, and there is no evidence that these courses do what they are intended to accomplish. Contrary to opponents’ argument against mandatory classes, the vast majority of studies indicate a weak to moderately positive gain in civic outcomes related to diversity experience (Mayhew et al., 2016).

In their review of diversity experiences’ effect on social justice outcomes, Mayhew et al. (2016) concluded that "general diversity experiences—occurring as part of co-curricular programs, extracurricular activities, or socializing with peers of diverse racial and ethnic groups—have demonstrable effects on a wide range of civic and political outcomes" (p. 276).

The University of California at Los Angles, Hamilton College in New York, and the University of Oklahoma are some prominent colleges that have adopted mandatory social justice-related courses for general education requirements. My theory supports the adoption of mandatory social justice-related classes as it undergirds the importance of Educating Self in the development toward Doing the Right Something through advocacy and allyship.

**Implications for Future Research**

In Chapter 3, I explained some of the delimitations and limitations of my study. Specifically, I identified that by design, I chose not to incorporate institutional or regional variables when developing my theory, which means that readers should exercise caution
when applying my theory to other settings. Additionally, I was unable to locate true negative cases, or cases where college students participated in advocacy and allyship and then completely stopped, nor was I able to interview adults who continued their involvement in advocacy and allyship after college. These delimitations and limitation provide opportunities for future inquiry.

Future longitudinal studies that follow activists in their post-graduate career could greatly contribute to an understanding of sustained advocacy and allyship. Additionally, research about college student advocacy and allyship at different institutions could provide insight to answer if this process differs significantly based on institutional type. Finally, research on effective intersectional activism could greatly enhance the ability to understand student commitment to and engagement in advocacy and allyship that is proven to be effective in combating interlocking, systemic oppression.

**Future Research on Sustaining Advocacy and Allyship**

My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship specifically addresses how students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship. Contextually, my substantive theory does not illustrate the development of sustained advocacy and allyship because I did not explore whether or not the commitment students demonstrate in college is sustained after they graduate. Participants in my study ranged from age eighteen to twenty-seven. Consequently, their participation in advocacy and allyship is relatively young compared to adults who engage in lifelong advocacy and allyship.

Minors can and do participate in activism. For example, at the time of writing, thousands of high school age students are marching, walking out and holding solidarity demonstrations for tighter gun control in the wake of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High
school tragedy where seventeen people were killed as a result of a mass shooting (Romo, 2018). However, while students may participate in advocacy and allyship starting at a young age, their engagement in advocacy and allyship is relatively young and does not yet represent a sustained commitment in their adult life. Future studies should focus on examining the process of advocacy and allyship over the lifetime to understand how students who are engaged advocacy and allyship in their college years maintain, reduce, or evolve this commitment as they mature. By understanding the process of sustained advocacy and allyship, higher education professionals may be able to isolate critical components of advocacy and allyship development at the colligate level that lead to more sustained commitment over a lifespan.

Furthermore, college and universities arguably offer students more opportunities or at least easier access to opportunities to participate in advocacy and allyship compared to potential opportunities after college. Consequently, I do not believe my theory addresses how students develop a sustained commitment to advocacy and allyship. All participants in this study indicated that they would remain engaged in advocacy and allyship post-college, usually by wishing to connect their vocation to advocacy and allyship or wanting to connect with activist groups outside of the collegiate setting. However, wanting to remain involved is not the same as actually staying involved; it is hard to predict what advocacy and allyship may look like in adulthood. Longitudinal research, which follows the post-graduate careers and lives of students who are engaged in advocacy and allyship during college, would greatly enhance our ability to understand how people develop a lifelong commitment to advocacy and allyship.
Future Research at Institutional Level

A substantial amount of scholarship addresses the effect of institutional type on collegiate outcomes (Mayhew et al., 2016). Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome explained that the institutional type significantly influences the environment, which in return effects the outcome for students who attend college. Accepting the influential nature of the environment, it is important to examine whether or not my model on advocacy and allyship applies to other institutional settings. Due to practical limitations, I chose not to introduce an institutional level variable to examine the process of advocacy and allyship in college students and consequently only recruited participants from two similar institutions, which were both predominantly white, large research universities in North Carolina. In my findings and methods, I provided a large amount of context that aids in the transferability of my model to other institutional types in other regions of the United States; however, advocacy and allyship research that takes into account regional and institutional differences could add robustness to my model and further its applicability in multiple settings.

Previous empirical research suggests that institutional type affects "sociopolitical orientation and attitudes, such as social activism, political engagement, liberalism, and support of individuals freedom" (Mayhew et al., 2016, p. 264). Specifically, research suggests that the private school structure enhances activism and civic values compared to public school structures (Lott, 2013; Sax, 2008). Furthermore, institutional missions appear to play a role in either broadly encouraging or discouraging activism and volunteerism. Work colleges, women's colleges, liberal arts colleges, and religious institutions increased civic values and engagement, while for-profit colleges decreased these values (Mayhew et al., 2016). The literature linking institutional type to civic engagement outcomes does not
address the process by which students commit to and engage in advocacy and allyship.

Nonetheless, because institutional type is linked to other civic engagement outcomes, it is reasonable to question whether the process of advocacy and allyship as I describe is similar or dissimilar for students attending different types of institutions. Future research should apply my model to different institutional settings such as community colleges, private institutions, historically black colleges and universities, and small liberal arts colleges.

Additionally, future research should explore my model and its applicability to different regions in the country. In my model, I identify the Sociopolitical Climate as an influencing factor that contextualizes and affects the process of advocacy and allyship. Specific to my model, Southeast politics such as North Carolina’s House Bill Two as well as the politically conservative-leaning legislature influenced my participants. National politics such as Trump’s election on policies also extremely influenced the advocacy and allyship for the students in my study. It is reasonable to wonder if my model applies to different regions in the country that tend to be more liberal-leaning or progressive. I try to account for regional difference and effects by including the Sociopolitical factor in my model. However, my model could be missing important micro-processes of advocacy and allyship because I did not draw participants from a wide variety of institutional types or regions. Future research should examine this possibility.

Finally as I mentioned in the limitation section, I was unable to recruit black males to participate in this study. Future research should intentionally seek out black males as well as other marginalized populations such as transgender students to examine if the process of advocacy and allyship is applicability to experiences of marginalized populations not represented in this study.
Future Research on Intersectional Activism

Although intersectionality research initially addressed intersecting identities of Black women, recent research has explored and argued for expanding the ideas of intersectionality in other fields, including critical praxis for social justice (DeFilipis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017; Grzanka, Santos & Moradi, 2017; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Hancock (2011) and Martinez (1993) explain how white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy create a sort of *Oppression Olympics* which pits groups against one another to maintain and reinforce the dominant status quo that benefits these systems. While I entered this research embracing an intersectional lens, my research and the theory I generated does not address the nuances of intersectional activism on college campuses because participants in this study did not name or address intersectionality as much as I initially thought they would. Consequently, I did not have enough evidence to saturate a concept related to tensions that exist between marginalized groups and efforts to fight oppression despite the fact that several of the participants alluded to intersectional activism and some of its challenges.

The Women's March in 2017 and the second March in 2018 illustrates some of this tension. Despite the stated efforts of the organizers of these marches to take an intersectional approach to dismantling oppression, many activists criticized the Women's March for only focusing on issues that apply to cis-gender, white women (Quashie, 2018; Ramanathan, 2017). In so much as these national conversations influence and/or are byproducts of college activism, an understanding of these tensions could help illuminate ways in which college campuses can encourage intersectional activism that works for the liberation of all people regardless of background or identity.
Future research should examine how students learn or do not learn about intersecting systemic oppression in order to gain an understanding of the skills necessary to take an intersectional approach to advocacy and allyship. Additionally, research should examine how students navigate tensions that can occur when activists, who have good intentions, leave out groups of people in their efforts. Does this exclusion deter individuals from taking part in activism or deter coalition building at the detriment of dismantling oppression?

Conclusions

My research on the process of advocacy and allyship illuminates critical concepts that guide students to exercise their agency in an effort to create a more socially just world. In Chapter One, I explained the relevancy and importance of my research as well as how institutions of higher education have always been places for students to challenge the status quo and consequently fight for more inclusion and liberation and end oppression for all people (Broadhurst, 2014; Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Rhoads, 1998). The resurgence of advocacy and allyship on college campuses contributes to the relevancy of understanding the process by which students commit to and engage in the process. Furthermore, if a central goal of the American higher education system is to create mature and civic-minded citizens, it is important to understand the process of activism that is empirically linked to these outcomes. My research on advocacy and allyship and the substantive theory I generated helps higher education professionals in this effort.

In identifying six processes (Becoming Aware, Educating Self, Exploring Beliefs About Advocacy and Allyship, Navigating Different Viewpoints, Feeling Connected, and Experiencing Affirmation) which all relate to the core process of Doing the Right Something, my theory specifically provides insight into how professionals can support and encourage the
student body toward advocacy and allyship. Too often scholarship only examines predictive quantitative factors of student activism and the outcomes of student activism. While identifying these factors is important, a lack of understanding the process makes it challenging to support and encourage activism. By discussing the process of advocacy and allyship, my research further contributes to understanding how institutions of higher education can increase a civic-minded citizenry by progressing advocacy and allyship on their campuses.

Additionally, my research highlights the messiness and challenges associated with describing advocacy, allyship, and the relationship within and between them. One of the first challenges is both the different definitions and the subsequent connotations people associate with terms related to advocacy and allyship. Furthermore, while in many ways advocacy and allyship are interconnected, they often feel different. In 1882, the Jewish poet Emma Lazarus "Until we are all free we are none of us free" (Schor, 2006, p.xi). The sentiment behind the words have been echoed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and more recently by activist such as Janelle Monae who proclaimed, "none of us are free until all of us are free" in a speech she gave at Council of Fashion and Designers of America (Blay, 2017).

Nonetheless many of the participants noted taking actions to end oppression of one's own marginalized group often feels distinctly different than taking actions to end oppression that more directly maps to oppression experienced by a group in which they did not have membership. Therefore, my research suggests the importance of the concepts associated with participating in both advocacy and allyship. This "both/and" mentality provides language to articulate how fighting oppression in all forms is necessary for the liberation of all people regardless of identity or background while also recognizing the nuances felt in
advocating on behalf of a cause that more readily maps to one's one marginalized group compared to advocating on behalf of a cause the more readily maps to a marginalized group in which a person does not share membership. By developing language to help articulate the challenging and messy process of advocacy and allyship, my substantive theory helps higher education professionals better understand and support students in their efforts to Do the Right Something.

Chapter Summary

I began this Chapter by briefly summarizing my substantive theory on advocacy and allyship and then proceeded to explore the theoretical implications of my substantive theory. Specifically, I argued that my theory has theoretical implications for symbolic interactionism, intersectional identity development, Critical Consciousness Theory, and in-group activist and ally development. Next, I discussed the practical implications my theory has for higher education practitioners. My substantive theory of advocacy and allyship helps higher education practitioners and professors support students as they participate in social activism as well as informs practices to increase involvement throughout the student body. Additionally, my theory contains practical implications for graduate higher education programs as they prepare student affairs professionals to address advocacy and allyship on their campuses. Finally, my theory illuminates structural and institutional responses that can increase students' participation in advocacy and allyship rather than dissuade or undermine participation.

After addressing the implication of my theory, I discussed the delimitations and limitations of my study. I then suggested areas for future research. These areas include future research on sustaining advocacy and allyship after graduation; research on advocacy
and allyship as it applies to different regional and institutional types; and an exploration of intersectional activism. I concluded the chapter with a brief overview of the importance in understanding the process of advocacy and allyship for college students.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A: Research Timeline

6.2.17 Obtain IRB approval
8.14.17 Sent recruitment emails to Southeastern University
8.18.17 First interview with Raja
8.21.17 Send recruitment emails to Southeastern College
8.22.17 First interview with Sandy
8.24.17 Code Raja's first interview
8.25.17 Code Sandy's first interview
8.25.17 First interview with LK
8.28.17 Code LK’s Interview
8.26.17 First interview with Zeitoun
8.29.17 Code Zeitoun's first interview
8.30.17 First interview with Jacob
9.1.17 Code Jacob's first interview

9.6.17 603 Initial Codes, Begin Focus Coding
9.11.17 Finished first round of Focus Coding 603 initial codes to 167 parent codes
9.13.17 Made slight alterations to interview1 guide

9.14.17 First interview with Scott
9.15.17 First interview with Paula
9.16.17 Obtain IRB approval for amendment to protocol (able to recruit on social media)
9.26.17 Code Scott’s First Interview
9.30.17 Code Paula's First Interview
9.28.17 First interview with Zgozi

9.29.17 Made slight alteration to interview1 guide
9.30.17 Continued merging and collapsing codes

10.1.17 Observe DACA rally (Raja primary organizer)

10.2.17 First interview with Charlotte
10.11.17 First interview with Lee (Did not finish, so interviewed again on 10.26)
10.23.17 Coded Zgozi's first interview
10.27.17 Coded Charlotte's first interview

11.6.17 As I was nearing the end of my second round of initial coding I created a hypothesis on the process of Advocacy and Allyship

11.9.17 Interview Raja about DACA rally

11.13.17 Finish Second round of Focus Coding: 35 codes
11.15.17 Refined hypothesis of the process of advocacy and allyship
11.16.17 Develop questions for second round of interviews.
11.17.17 Second Interview with Sandy
11.18.17 Coded Lee's first interview using new codes (no new themes emerged!)

11.18.17 Begin extensive memoing on 35 remaining codes, keeping in mind the language of concept, category, property, and dimension. Asked what is ESSENTIAL to the process, meaning if it doesn't happen the process will not occur.

11.20.17 Created first diagram of advocacy and allyship
11.27.17 Adapt 2nd Interview Guide based on extensive memo phase.

11.29.17 Second Interview with Jacob
11.29.17 Second Interview with Lee
11.30.17 Second Interview with Paula
11.30.17 Second Interview with Scott
12.1.17 Second Interview with LK
12.4.17 Second Interview with Charlotte

12.11.17 Finish big chunk of memoing, moving toward theory integration

12.11.17 Coded Jacob's second interview (two new codes, learning to be an activists and choosing not to act)

12.13.17 Second Interview with Ngozi
12.14.17 Coded Sandy's Second interview (no new codes)
12.15.17 Coded Lee's, Scott's Paula's, LK's and Raja's second interview (two more codes)
12.16.17 Second Interview with Zeitoun
12.17.17 Coded Ngozi, Charlotte's and Zietoun's Second Interview (no new codes)

12.20-26.17 Worked on diagraming model and memoing.

1.8.18 Sent all participants advocacy and allyship model for feedback. I received feedback form 5 out of 10.

1.18.18 Obtained IR approval for practitioner check. I received practitioner checks from 4 higher education professional

4.19.18 Submitted draft to committee
Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

Dear Gray Ashley:

Date: June 16, 2017
IRB Protocol 12043 has been assigned Exempt status
Title: Constructivist Approach to Understanding Advocacy and Allyship in Traditional Age College Students
PI: Gayles, Joy Gaston

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. Exempt b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the protocol and supporting documents must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems or adverse events occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days by completing and submitting the unanticipated problem form on the IRB website: http://research.ncsu.edu/sparcs/compliance/irb/submission-guidance/.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Deb Paxton
919.515.4514
IRB Administrator
dapaxton@ncsu.edu
NC State IRB Office

Jennie Ofstein
919.515.8754
IRB Coordinator
irb-coordinator@ncsu.edu
NC State IRB Office
Appendix C: Gatekeeper Email

Dear [Name of Program Contact]

I’m writing to seek your assistance in recruiting participants for research I am conducting on college student activism. Specifically, my research aims to understand the process in which traditional age, undergraduate college students develop a commitment to and engaged in advocacy for their own marginalized communities and allyship for other marginalized communities in which the student does not have membership. This research is important because activism combines the espoused goals of civic engagement and diversity and inclusion on college campuses, yet we know relatively little about why and how students commit to activism against oppression. In addition, students who advocate on behalf of their own marginalized communities AND other marginalized communities for which they do not have membership may have unique experiences that are not currently captured in activist or ally development literature.

In order to understand this experience better, I am seeking participants for my study who:

- are undergraduate, traditional age, and full time enrolled.
- self-identify with AT LEAST one for the following groups: student of color; women, transgender or other gender nonconformist identities; non-Christian people of faith or no faith; lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and other non-heterosexual identities; students from low socio-economic backgrounds; students with physical and/or cognitive disabilities.
- have engaged in activist efforts on behalf of their own marginalized communit(ies) listed above AND participate in activist efforts for AT LEAST one group marginalized group for which they are not a member.

I have obtained Institutional Review Board approval from my institution, North Carolina State University to conduct this research. I’m happy to send you a copy of my approval letter if you would like.

I would appreciate it if you could send the announcement attached to this email to undergraduate students involved with [NAME OF PROGRAM]. If you have specific students in mind who you think meet the inclusion criteria mentioned above, please feel free to contact them directly with this information. If you or your students have any questions about my research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Ashley Gray
Doctoral Student, Education Research and Policy Analysis, North Carolina State University. amgray5@ncsu.edu.
Appendix D: Participant Email

Seeking Participants for a Research Study on College Student Activism

Are you currently or have you ever been actively engaged in activist efforts to end oppression for a marginalized group that you share membership in AND activist efforts to end oppression for marginalized group that you do not share membership in? If so, I would like to talk to you about these experiences. If you are interested in participating in my research, you must complete the brief questionnaire attached to this email, which I will use to measure your compatibility for my study.

Once selected for the study, I will interview you one to three times during the course of the school year. Although it is not mandatory for participation, I will ask if you willing for me to observe in any visible activist efforts that you engage in. For participating in this study, you will receive a $30.00 Visa gift card. In addition to this monetary incentive, your participation in this study will help me develop a theory of advocacy and allyship in traditional age college students. It is my hope that this theory may help college and universities create campuses that encourage students to fight systems of oppression both within the academy and in society at large.

If you would like to participate, please follow this link to the five-minute questionnaire mentioned earlier. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me. I can be reached by email at amgray5@ncsu.edu.

Ashley Gray
Doctoral Candidate in Education Research and Policy Analysis at North Carolina State University.
Appendix E: Prescreening Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research on student activism. I am conducting research on student activism with the express purpose of understanding how students commit to ending oppression for disadvantaged groups. Through my research, I hope to identify ways universities can encourage more students to engage in efforts to dismantle oppression.

This brief 5-minute survey is designed to gather demographic information and to help organize my researching effort. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have, amgray5@ncsu.edu.

I sincerely appreciate your time.

In best regards,
Ashley Gray, PhD student.
Educational Research and Policy Analysis- NC State University

Please enter your email so I can contact you, should you be chosen for this study.

Q1 For the purpose of my study, I define a student activist as any person who takes action toward ending inequalities for any marginalized, disadvantaged group. Please identify all groups that you are an activist for. (check all that apply)

- People of Color
- Women
- Transgendered, Gender Queer, and Gender Non-Conformist
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Pansexuals, and Asexual individuals
- Individuals from lower socio economic backgrounds
- Immigrants
- Undocumented individuals
- People with different abilities and disabilities
- Muslims
- Jewish People
- A group that is not listed above, please specify ____________________
Q2 There are many ways to be an activist. For each group you checked above please briefly tell me what types of actions you have taken as an activist for these groups. [Skip logic was used to link the answer specifically to the group for which the student is an activist for]

Q3 How old are you?
☐ 17 or younger
☐ 18
☐ 19
☐ 20
☐ 21
☐ 23-25
☐ 26 or older

Q4 What is your class standing?
☐ First Year Student
☐ Sophomore
☐ Junior
☐ Senior
☐ Graduate Student

Q5 How do you identify your gender?
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Transgender
☐ Gender Queer
☐ Gender Non Conforming
☐ Identity not listed above, please specify ____________________
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q6 Which racial/ethnic identity do you best identify with?
☐ African American or Black
☐ Asian or Asian American
☐ Caucasian, White or European American
☐ Hispanic, Latina, or Latino
☐ Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial
☐ American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous. First Nations or Native American
☐ Arab or Middle Eastern
☐ Identity not listed above, please specify ____________________
☐ Prefer not to answer
Q7 How do you identify your sexual orientation?
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Heterosexual
- Identity not listed above, please specify ____________________
- Prefer not to answer

Q8 What is your religion, faith, or spirituality?

Q9 What is your economic class?

Q10 Do you identify as a military veteran or service member?
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Q11 Do you identify as an immigrant?
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Q12 Do you have a cognitive, mental, hearing, visual, or physical disability?
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer
Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH
Title of Study: A Constructivist Approach to Understanding the Development of Advocacy and Allyship in College Students

Principal Investigator: Ashley M. Gray
Faculty Sponsor (if applicable): Joy Gaston Gayles

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to develop a theory on how students develop a commitment to fighting oppression of their own marginalized group(s) and develop a commitment to fighting oppression of marginalized group(s) for which the student is not member. The theory developed through this research may inform the creation of more-effective diversity policies and programming on college campuses by identifying ways that institutions of higher education can support students who challenge oppressive systems within the university and society at large.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to (1) Complete a questionnaire (2) Participate in at least one and no more than three face-to-face interviews with me (3) Be observed in activism and protest efforts.

Questionnaire: While being recruited for this study, you received a brief electronic questionnaire that asked you to identify which groups that advocate for. You were also asked about the types of activist efforts you have engaged in on behalf of these groups. Finally, you were also asked a series of demographic questions pertaining to your age, academic class standing, gender, racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, religion/faith/spirituality, economic class, veteran status, immigrant status and disability. You were not required to disclose any of this demographic question as there was a “prefer not to answer question.” I used this questionnaire to measure your fit for my study and have identified you as a good fit.

Interviews: You will be asked to participate in at least one, and as many as three face-to-face interviews with me. During these interviews, I will ask you questions about your activism experiences. Each interview will take thirty minutes to two hours. These interviews will take place at your university or college. I will ask for your permission to audio record the interview.

Observations: At the end of your first interview, I will ask if you know of any visible activist actions you will be taking and if you are ok with me observing you in this action. If you do not know of any activist actions you will be taking, I will ask you to please reach out to me as you plan your future activist actions and if you are ok with me observing you in this action. If you are ok with me observing you, I will attend the activist event and take notes.

In addition, after the interviews have been transcribed, I will ask you to review the transcripts (which I will email to you) for accuracy and to email any comments or corrections you have to me. At the conclusion of
the study, I will also ask you to review and provide comments on the theory of advocacy and allyship development that I generate through this research. Participation in the transcript review and theory review is optional; however, doing so will help make sure that my conclusions make sense and reflect your experiences. Reviewing transcripts will likely require 30 minutes to 1 hour of your time. Reading and providing feedback on the grounded theory that I develop through this research will likely require 1-2 hours of your time. No data or other information that would jeopardize your confidentiality will be shared with others who review the theory.

**Risks and Benefits**

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. One possible risk is that other participants and/or higher education professional reading the final report may be able to identify you based on your activist action and/or words. To minimize this risk, I will ask you to choose pseudonym for yourself. If you do not wish to choose a pseudonym for you, I will provide one for you. In addition, during the interviews, I may ask questions that elicit an emotional response, specifically question regarding your experience with oppression. If I notice that you seem uncomfortable or upset, I will ask you if you want to continue. If you feel that you would like to contact [NC State’s / University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill’s] at anytime, you can reach them at [919.515.2423/ 919.966.3658].

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. However, because the purpose of this research is to develop a practically useful theory on college students’ advocacy and allyship development that university staff can use in their practice to support student activism, you may indirectly benefit by contributing your experiences and knowledge to help develop this theory, thereby leading to future campus environments that are more supportive of students like you, who are committed to fighting oppression within the institution and society at large. You may also indirectly benefit from the opportunity to reflect upon your advocacy and allyship involvement in meaningful ways.

**Confidentiality**

The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. All study documents and data will be stored securely in password protected files on the researcher’s personal computer and on a flash drive kept in a locked safe. All study documents and data (including questionnaires, interview transcripts, and observation notes), as well as any data included in oral or written reports, will use the pseudonyms you have chosen for yourself (or that I have chosen for you) so that you cannot be identified. Only, members of my dissertation committee, and the transcriptionist I hire will have access to study data and documents. However, only I will know your true identity. All study documents that contain personally identifiable information will be destroyed one year after I have defended the dissertation for which this research is the basis. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

**Compensation**

For participating in this study, you will receive $30.00 visa gift card.

**What if you are a NCSU student/UNC-CH**

Participation in this study is not a course requirement and your participation or lack thereof, will not affect your class standing or grades at NC State.

**What if you have questions about this study?**

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Ashley Gray, by email address at amgray5@ncsu.edu or by phone 770.846.1696.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator at dapaxton@ncsu.edu or by phone at 1-919-515-4514.

**Consent To Participate**

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date _________________

Investigator's signature_____________________________________ Date _________________
Appendix G: First Interview Guide

Introduction Questions
1. Tell me about your activism
   Follow up prompts:
   - What groups are you an activist for?
   - What types of actions do you take in your activist work?

2. How did you become committed to activism in general?
   Follow up prompts:
   - Tell me about any experiences that lead you to activism?
   - Tell me about any influential people that lead you to activism?

3. Why do you participate in activism work?
   Follow up prompts:
   - How are you motivated to take actions to end oppression?
   - Are there any challenges you have faced in your activism work? How have you overcome them?

Advocacy Questions
3. You indicated on my initial survey that you are an activist for [marginalized group(s) the student shares membership in]. Tell me about your specific activism for this group(s).
   Follow up prompts
   - When did you begin your activist work for this group?
   - How did you become involved in activism for this group?
   - What types of actions do you take in your activist work for this group?
   - Who is influential in your activism for this group?
   - Why are you an activist for this group specifically?
   - What barriers does this group face?
   - Can you tell me about a meaningful moment or experience you have had while advocating for this group.

6. How does participating in activism for this group make you feel?

7. How do you feel about the future for this group?

Allyship Questions:
8. You indicated on my brief initial survey that you are an activist for [marginalized group(s) in which the student does not share membership]. Tell me about your specific activism for this group(s)
   Follow up prompts
   - When did you become an ally for this group?
   - How did you become involved in activism for this group?
• What types of actions do you take in your activist work for this group?
• Who is influential in your activism for this group?
• Why are you an ally for this group specifically?
• What barriers does this group face?
• Can you tell me about a meaningful moment or experience you have had while advocating for this group.

10. How does participating in activism for this group make you feel?

11. How do you feel about the future for this group?

Advocacy and Allyship Comparison
12. How is your activism the same or different for each of these groups?
   Follow up prompts:
   • How the barriers for these groups similar or different?
   • How are you actions the same or different for these groups?

13. Why are you an activist for both groups instead of only one or the other?

14. In what ways does your own identity play or not play a role when you are an activist for [marginalized group(s) the students shares membership in] and when you are an activist for [marginalized group(s) in which the student does not share membership]

15. Where do you see your future activism work going?
   Follow up prompts:
   • How do you plan to stay involved in this work after college?
   • Are there any other groups you foresee yourself being an active activist for?

Ending Questions
16. Please describe your general activism journey as a metaphor

17. What advice do you have for a college student who is participating in activist work for the first time?

18. What advice do you have for a college student participating in ally work for the first time?

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your activist and ally work?

20. Do you have any plans to participate in activist and ally work in the coming semester? If so, are you open to me observing this work?
Appendix H: Second Interview Guide

**Becoming Aware of Oppression**
1) Please describe the first time you became aware of oppression, discrimination, differential or prejudicial treatment?
   Follow Up:
   What group (s) were oppressed?
   Do you remember what you did?
   Prompt for other groups
   LGBT
   Lower SES
   People of Color
   Immigrants
   Women
   Religious Minorities
   People with different abilities

2) Can you walk me through a specific experience depended in your understanding of oppression?

**Learning to be an Activists**
3) Where and/or how did you learn to be an activist?
4) How did you develop your beliefs about advocacy? About allyship?

**Navigating different Ideologies**
5) How do you go about discussing issues of oppression with people who hold different views then you?
   Follow up:
   Where did you learn this skill?

**Identity at activism**
6) In what ways are you personally advantaged and disadvantaged society? How does this play a role in your activism?

**Not being an Activists**
7) Has there ever been a time where you became aware of or witnesses oppression, discrimination toward a group or an individual and did not take action? If so why?

**Committing to life long Activism**
8) What’s the next step in your personal activist journey?

9) Where do you see your activism efforts 5 or 10years form now?

**Experimenting with activism**
10) Can you walk me through a time where your activists efforts did not feel successful?

11) Can you walk me through a time where you had successes in you activists efforts?
Appendix I: Observation Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participate Pseudonym:</th>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy, Allyship, or Both:</td>
<td>Rough number in attendance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of Event:</td>
<td>Purpose of Event:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Event:</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Observer Notes</th>
<th>Actions of Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Follow Up Questions:

1. What was the purpose of the event/rally?
2. Can you walk me through your decision to be at/organize the event?
3. How do you think the event/rally went?
4. What was most challenging to you?
5. Was there anything unexpected?
6. How did you feel during and immediately after the event/rally?
Appendix J: Practitioner’s Check Email

Subject: Seeking practitioner feedback on my theory of college students’ advocacy and allyship

Hi [NAME],

I hope you’re doing well and that your spring semester is off to a good start! I have a favor to ask of you. I’ve been working on my dissertation research, the purpose of which is to generate a grounded theory explaining the process by which college students commit to and participate in advocacy and allyship. My hope is that this theory will inform educational practice so student affairs educators can better support students in developing a commitment to ideals of social justice and civic engagement. I’ve developed a draft of my theory and am hoping you might be able to give me some feedback on it in terms of your own experience as a student affairs practitioner. The grounded theory method encourages such “practitioner checks” since the goal of a grounded theory is for it have practical utility.

I’m attaching three pdf documents here: one is a visual representation of my theory, one is a short 5-page explanation of the model and the third is an informed consent form that details risks and benefits of participating in my study. What is excluded from the documents is direct quotes from my participants that I used to develop this theory. I am currently writing my final manuscript and am more than happy to send it your way after its done! However, my hope from this practitioner check is to gain an understanding of how useful this model is as a stand-alone document.

If you have time to look at my drafted theory and give me feedback, I’d love to know specifically:
(1) How well does the theory reflect what you’ve observed with your students in your professional role? (Keep in mind that my theory is meant to apply broadly, so no single student’s experience will exactly match my theory, but my hope is that it applies broadly to the experiences of students who participate in advocacy and allyship).
(2) Does it make sense overall?
(3) Is there anything significant missing from it?
(4) Is this theory something that you might find useful in informing your practice, in terms of helping you provide support to students who participate in advocacy and allyship?

If you’re able to, please send me any feedback you have by [date 2 weeks from when email is sent]. Any feedback you have will help strengthen the explanatory value and usefulness of my theory. I understand I’m asking a lot of your time, so if you’re not able to give me feedback, I completely understand.

Cheers,
Ashley
Appendix K: Practitioner's Check Consent Form

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: A Constructivist Approach to Understanding the Development of Advocacy and Allyship in College Students

Principal Investigator: Ashley M. Gray
Faculty Sponsor (if applicable): Joy Gaston Gayles

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to develop a theory on how students develop a commitment to fighting oppression of their own marginalized group(s) and develop a commitment to fighting oppression of marginalized group(s) for which the student is not member. The theory developed through this research may inform the creation of more-effective diversity policies and programming on college campuses by identifying ways that institutions of higher education can support students who challenge oppressive systems within the university and society at large.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to (1) Provide feedback on the advocacy and allyship I have generated.

Providing feedback: I am asking you to email me back or talk with me directly to provide any feedback that would strengthen the utility of this model.

Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. When incorporating your feedback in the final manuscript, I may need to refer to you by name. So, one possible risk is that other higher education professional reading the final report may be able to identify you. To minimize this risk, I will ask you to choose pseudonym for you.

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. However, because the purpose of this research is to develop a practically useful theory on college students’ advocacy and allyship development that university staff can use in their practice to support student activism, you may indirectly benefit by contributing your experiences and knowledge to help develop this theory, thereby leading to future campus environments that are more supportive of students who are committed to fighting oppression within the institution and society at large.

Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. All study documents and data will be stored securely in password protected files on the researcher’s personal computer and on a flash drive kept in a locked safe. All study documents and data (including questionnaires, interview transcripts, and observation notes), as well as any data included in oral or written
reports, will use the pseudonyms you have chosen for yourself (or that I have chosen for you) so that you cannot be identified. Only, members of my dissertation committee, and the transcriptionist I hire will have access to study data and documents. However, only I will know your true identity. All study documents that contain personally identifiable information will be destroyed one year after I have defended the dissertation for which this research is the basis. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

**Compensation**
None

**What if you have questions about this study?**
If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Ashley Gray, by email address at amgray5@ncsu.edu or by phone 770.846.1696.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator at dapaxton@ncsu.edu or by phone at 1-919-515-4514.
Appendix L: Activism Journey Metaphor

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
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<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>I'm thinking of Shrek [a reference to the 2001 Disney film where the main character refers to himself as an Onion] and the Onion kind of thing where there's many layers. I think that's how I discovered advocacy or activism. You are one thing, and you feel like you're doing something, and there's ... Onion's probably not the right metaphor then but you pull something away and ten other things pop up. You're like, &quot;Oh there's just so much more.&quot; Then you've got to keep working at things, and there's just a lot there. I can't think of a good metaphor that resembles that. There are just so many layers.</td>
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<td>Jacob</td>
<td>I'm thinking of the simple thing of being in a cocoon and being a butterfly, but I feel like that doesn't really represent it, being sheltered at home and being confined in this conservative environment and then breaking out of that. That doesn't really tell the whole story. [Then I bump into so many] different types of butterflies that have come out of their cocoons</td>
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<td>Lee</td>
<td>It's like something you hear people say all the time, but it's similar to the old saying, but not the old saying exactly, but it's like taking two steps forward and then like ... but it's not two steps back. It's like two steps forward and then sometimes you take a third step forward, and then you take a step back, and then you take a half-step back and another step forward, and you never know, like with abortion, you never know if that's going to be taken off the table. We think we got it, but it can always go away. Just like we think slavery in the US is like slavery of people of color is over, but it's not. There's still other forms of that going on, but I don't know. It's like you're going forward, but you always got to be looking out and seeing the regression.</td>
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My activist journey is like the seasons. It's always changing. I think a diversity of tactics will be used to create change. I'm not going to become stagnant in hopefully any area of my life, including my activism. I would probably get very drained if I was just doing the same thing over and over again. [Working as a student leader in the gender equity club] is awesome. I've been doing it for a while but it's dynamic. We do anything from educating and workshops to straight-up demonstrations and blocking the Genocide Awareness Project, which is an anti-abortion group that comes together. So yeah, I'd say like seasons because I'm constantly trying to readjust to meet the needs of the communities that need help and to meet the needs of the political atmosphere. So yeah. I'd say it's very dynamic. I love it. I think it's important.

This is weird, but like the first thing I thought of was just like a muffin or just like any baked good that has like baking powder or like leavening stuff in it. Just because on its own, it's just batter or whatever. It's just sitting in an oven. But with the oven's turned on - or so in my mind—like the oven is the world and like situations going on. When those kinds of things happen that like impacts the muffin and causes it to rise and do stuff, like be a muffin to a certain extent. So I would say it's just injustice in the world has caused me to be like this

I guess I would describe it as a dandelion. Like you can blow it and hope that your activism spreads, and then it'll turn into other plants and other dandelions. You know? Making their way around. If you do one act, you're gonna spread your knowledge and your awareness, and the motivation to others.
Raja  I feel like my activist journey has been like the really typical '80s teenage movies, if that makes sense? In that first part it's this person who's like, "I want to fit in and be popular." What's that movie? *13 Going on 30.* That's not an '80s movie, but you know? She's like, "I want to fit in and be popular." As a 13-year-old kid. Then she becomes that and she's like, "This isn't, I mean I'm popular but this is not how I wanted it to be. This is not the right fit for me." Then she goes back in time and she's like, "What happened?" She was like, "Wow, I was so desperate to be popular that I didn't even understand what it actually meant to be liked and loved by people." Then she redefines her definition of what it means and what the steps are, and then she becomes someone that she's actually proud to be and she is popular, but for not for a shallow, vapid reason, and not because she hurts people.

Sandy  I would say like a flower blooming, but I think I've used to describe me coming out of the closet. It feels like I'm removing the old perceptions I have, kind of peeling an egg, like an egg shell. Like cracking an egg. But slowly. I don't know, that's weird, but just peeling the pieces of an egg and so removing the old and seeing what's actually underneath. As opposed to, I don't know. It feels like I'm removing the things that I've heard and been told and learned, which I guess is funny because I'm being told and learning those things. It feels like I'm removing those things and just uncovering something else that's underneath there, which is, I think, like a passion and like a zeal, like a fire. It's like I'm removing the shell of an egg and there's a fire beneath it and I'm just learning more and more about that fire as I remove the old perceptions and understandings of things that I've been taught my whole life, I guess.

Scott  This is kind of cheesy and kind of science-y, but my activist journey is like a photon. It has no mass, it doesn't have weight, but it still warms people, it makes plants grow, it carries so much weight to bringing life to this planet. You can't hold it, you can't see one photon by itself, but the impact that one
has given the trillions or billions of photons that come to this planet every
day, I can make a change.

Zeitoun  I'm going to pull from religious text again, just because I'm used to metaphors
in Islam. There's something that we say, like a drop of water in the ocean. If
you take a drop out it doesn't make a difference to the ocean. That's what I
feel like my activist work is. While I'm making progress and I'm that drop in
the ocean, unless every other single drop does something, nothing is going to
happen. That's how I'd feel. Yeah, I'm able to touch the people that are
around me, within my sphere of influence and individuals a little bit outside
that circle, a little bit outside that circle, individuals who hear my name or saw
my works or just hear about me from word of mouth, or interact with me
personally, those are the people I influence. But, unless all those people I've
reached out to do the same thing, cause a ripple effect, nothing's happening in
this ocean. That's what I do. I'm that drop in the ocean. Unless you have a
ripple effect start, that's that.