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Artivism and the Importance of Community for DACA and Undocumented College Students in the United States: A Literature Review

Crystal Yanez
cyanez@lesley.edu

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Artivism and the Importance of Community for DACA and Undocumented College

Students in the United States: A Literature Review

Capstone Thesis

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Crystal P. Yanez

Art Therapy

Raquel Stephenson, Ph.D., ATR-BC, LCAT

Abstract

This literature review explores artivism, the combination of art and activism, which uses the online capabilities of the internet and social media, making it a modern version of art activism – the immense networking opportunities and the ability to reach a larger audience. The findings show that artivism was grown from art in activism or art activism as early as the 1400s and the positive impacts artivism brings to communities.

Keywords: artivism, art activism

Artivism and the Importance of Community: DACA and Undocumented College

Students in the United States

Introduction

In this critical review of the literature, there will be a focus on 1) defining what is 'artivism' and terms associated with the selected population, 2) the evolution of what artivism is in juxtaposition to 'art in activism,' and 3) examples of artivism and its social impact. Art has an incredible history of attaching itself to social movements and creating communities. Goris and Hollander (2017) argue that visual arts, out of all art forms, are often used in civic action (p. 15). When concerns about social injustices arise, as Yong (2020) describes, an increasing number of artists begin to respond through their media and present the artwork to their society (public spaces). Art intervening in society creates the bridge between art and social action (pp. 10-12). The topics of consideration in this paper are the collision of art and activism that then results in the new term, 'artivism,' only because this new form of artistic advocacy endorses the use of the internet and social media. Restrictions of traditional demonstrations or visuals of art(s) activism are the location and the time it was witnessed or displayed. The online capabilities make artivism a modern version of art activism – the immense networking opportunities and ability to reach a larger audience. Being online in some form is considered normal in everyday life in many developed countries, and why the concentration is on artivism compared to other activism using art. Pew Research Center's (2021) recent survey of mobile phone ownership states that 85% of Americans own a smartphone. Both computers and smartphones make it easier to share artivism projects regarding social

justice issues, which brings the subsequent consideration of undocumented college

students' challenges.

Along with the consideration, the clarification of differences between

undocumented students and students with work permits from the US government. Within

the United States of America, there is a need to explore further the lack of essential

support on-and-off college campuses for these students. To uncover where barriers the

students encounter and the unaware areas the larger community may not recognize.

Finding an understanding of how meaningful vocal and visual endorsements are for these

students while they are in their undergraduate studies and how to move forward with

other artivism projects.

Literature Review

This literature review will first define what 'artivism' is compared to 'art

activism,' and provide examples of contemporary artivism projects. Even though they

lack the tag 'artivism' in the articles, they have qualities that fit the essence of what

artivism holds. The projects presented in the literature were not all done in a traditional

theoretical orientation when analyzing the impact of their art and societal concerns or

social justice. Many civic problems were personal to the original creator(s), either

because of observation or passion for the cause.

Method

To find relatable articles, the search of similar terms and keywords provided

avenues of information, i.e., art activism, within the Lesley University Library online

database. To be labeled an artivism project, a first critical review of the artistic project

had to be an indicator of using the internet and social media to reach a larger audience.

Therefore, when looking at the art projects, I examined if the art was created in response to a social justice or humanity concern and if the creators actively used social media. To ensure that reputable information was presented within this literature review, all sources were peer-reviewed journal articles and graduate-level theses.

Definition of Terms

DACA

A few terms need to be defined that are used to describe individuals who are undocumented students. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students, Dreamers, and (depending on the state) Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) students are all common phrases. The term 'undocumented' can be, as Dr. Matt Smith, Director of the Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA) and The Center for Multi-Ethnic and Cultural Affairs (MECA), describes it as an individual who lives and works within the United States without legal protection. In contrast, DACA recipients have protection from deportation on a two-year renewal basis. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was an executive order from the Obama administration in 2012. It allowed individuals brought to the US as a child to legitimately work and, in some states, finally obtain a driver's license legally. Before there was DACA, there was the DREAM Act – Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors. Congress introduced the policy in 2001 that allowed undocumented young people, referred to as 'Dreamers,' a path to citizenship. Unfortunately, 20 years later, Dreamers still dream because the bill never became law due to falling short on votes. The closest the bill ever came to a complete passage was in 2010, when it passed the House but failed to pass within the Senate by five votes (American Immigration Council, 2021).

The identifier of Dreamer is still used among many due to its widespread support in numerous states. Using Washington State as an example, these students might be called a 'WASFA student,' meaning they filed a separate financial aid application. This application would allow them to obtain in-state tuition and state financial assistance because of their ineligibility to receive federal aid (Smith, 2017).

In a broad aspect, the terms essentially mean the same thing due to the several overlapping challenges these individuals encounter. The difference between being a DACA student is that these individuals might have a slightly higher sense of security because the permit allows them to obtain legal identification in some states, have the opportunities to work lawfully, and gives them protection from deportation. In addition, if a DACA student holds a college degree, they will be able to work in their field of study and develop a retirement plan because of the permit. Undocumented college graduates lack this possibility, which is why both terms are within this paper.

Artivism

Continuing examining what artivism is by first the simplicities, artivism is a word that combines art and activism. There is no official definition for 'artivism' within the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, Dictionary.com, or Cambridge Dictionary. According to Google Trends records, the word 'artivism' has been a worldwide search term since February 2006 (Google, 2021). Conversely, the lack of an official definition made it challenging to find peer-reviewed journals within academic databases. There are projects that have used the arts for advocation without the term 'artivism' used within their work. Other terms to discover articles included protest art, art activism, art-as-activism, arts-based activism, art for social change, art for civic awareness, and social

justice art. McPherson and Mazza (2004) help define the term artivism within their project, *One Million Bones* (p. 946)*,* using editors Bradley and Esche's (2007) description of contemporary activism using art. The editors depict the method "as a new hybrid practice 'positioned at the intersection of art and political activism, empowered by new forms of social organization, enabled by the Internet" (p. 11). In an additionally found resource – a blog post, Barson and Rodriguez (2019) define artivism as a creation of "a new culture rooted in the struggles against patriarchal capitalism from time-immemorial" (para. 8).

Steven Duncombe (2016) boils down the components of artivism into two parts (stated in the most simplistic terms): activism equals effect, while art equals affect. Nevertheless, both effect and affect are essential to stimulate social changes. "Activism moves the material world [effect], while art moves a person's heart, body, and soul [affect]" (p. 118). Furthermore, to get people to decide to change their minds and embark on making social justice changes, they must first be "moved to do so by emotionally powerful stimuli" (p. 119), as the message within the created artwork moves the viewers emotionally. The emotional response from the artivism creation is the trigger for something more in the viewer. The trigger would be, hopefully, enough to simulate the action. Then, as described by Duncombe, the equation becomes affect equals effect. Or "affective effect and/or effective affect" (p. 119).

Standing Still. "Activist art that doesn't move us leaves us standing still" (Duncombe, 2016, p. 131). The idea of art having the power to move its audience was observed by Plato, which he objected to. He remarked on his criticisms of how the audience would experience the pleasure of the characters' victories and the pain of

hardship in dramatic plays (Plato 1955, Book 10 as cited in Duncombe, 2016). This one

example (out of uncountable possible examples) is why art is compelling as a form of

activism, but the exact nature of this power puzzles so many. Over the years,

philosophers and critics would call the power of art 'sublime' since it can be beautiful

while simultaneously being horrific. Either way, the power of art, as evidence suggests,

works (Duncombe, 2016). As Plato once criticized so harshly, the tying of the potential

power within art is precisely the link needed. The utilization of art to grow the

community of support more immensely for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

(DACA) and undocumented undergraduate students. Harnessing artistic expression to

gather a community together or speak up against inequality is not a new strategy for

challenging societal norms. Visual art sparks conversations, trigger emotions, and carries

messages received across different languages worldwide (Nossel, 2016).

Evolution of Artivism

Before artivism, it is essential to recognize 'protest art' – an all-encompassing

term of creative work seeking justice. Created in various artistic styles and is usually

made from materials available for the purpose of the project. For example, protest signs

might need cardboard and large markers, or graffiti art would be spray paint and possible

stencils (UWM, 2020). McQuiston (2019) created a timeline tracking protest art,

formerly known as 'political print,' in the 1400s and early 1500s when printing became

less time-consuming to create a multitude of duplicates. The author comments on how

this revolution in the printing technique worked effectively to share messages through

imagery because a large portion of the population was illiterate. McQuiston notes that

Martin Luther's Reformation directed the first significant resistance movement directed at

the Catholic Church in 1517. In Wittenberg, Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theological

Thesis, which contained many aggressive and crude illustrations by German artists,

nailed onto the church door. By the 1600s, an artist named Jacque Callot created a

sequence of small etchings that "is considered one of the first attempts to show how the

horrors of war impact the very fabric of society, particularly the common people" (1500-

1900: Introduction, 2019, para. 4).

      According to Rodal et al.'s (2019) research, some theorists believe the origin of

Action Art, another synonym referencing art activism, first began during the first avant-

garde movements. Especially the Dadaist and Futurist movements, which started in the

early 1900s. Nevertheless, it was not until the sixties and seventies that Action Art took

on differentiating features that included themes that were related to social and political

transformation. Rodal et al. detailed how these artistic manifestations were still

considered Action Art due to space and time restrictions, with the atmospheric feeling of

an 'event' more than anything. Since the emergence of the internet and multiple versions

of social media platforms at the end of the twentieth century, Action Art evolved to

become *Artivism.* Many agree with Rodal et al. or recognize this new progression (Goris

& Hollander, 2017; McPherson & Mazza, 2004; Bradley & Esche, 2007).

      "Art has the ability to change our minds—inspiring us to take on different

perspectives and to reimagine our worlds" (Nossel, 2016, p. 103).

Contemporary Artivism

      During the 2016 election in the United States to present current events, the

collaborative artmaking of various groups within the states and around the world

responded to a wave of violence and discrimination. Starting with the day after Donald J.

Trump's inauguration as the 45th US President in January of 2017, people worldwide

marched in a demonstration against Trump's sexist attitudes, behavior, and comments.

With over half a million protesters marched in Washington, D.C. alone. The collective

artmaking of signs created a continued interlacing of unity among the people joining the

protests. Various artists shared their designs to be used in printing and sign making, such

as the poster series by Shepard Fairey titled, *We the People*. Fabric artists freely shared

their knitting patterns of "pussyhats with cat-ears" online. The knitting community

translated the instructions into multiple languages, and countless crowd participants wore

them during the marches (Women's rights, 2019).

When the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic was limiting large

gatherings in 2020, creating and sharing art online became a vehicle to stand in solidarity

with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The second movement revived in

response to the death of George Floyd because of the use of lethal force by a Minneapolis

police officer. An anonymous Instagram account, @artistsforgeorge, uploads artistic

portraits of George Floyd. The artist then has their artwork printed as large signs that they

give out to protesters at the beginning of BLM demonstrations. This artist created the

politically charged art anonymously because they are immigrants in the United States.

They feared the retaliation of deportation if they attended a protest that led to a violent

situation with the New York Police Department (NYPD). The construction and printing

of the artwork were their way of contributing and showing support for the Black Lives

Matter movement and opposing police brutality (Schonfeld, 2020).

Social Media Users and Influencers. With the growth and diversity of social

media, more users utilize the platforms to generate attention to social injustices through

performance art. Some performance art can be short video sketches or music parodies. Much like EC (n.d.) and many other users, they began writing, performing, and posting on their Instagram profiles, @socolorfull, and other social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube. Their music parodies focus on political topics. Examples are the Storming of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, the significant growing divide between the US political parties, the 2020 US Presidential election, and matters regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Others have group collaboration and host live stream events. For example, Genie Santiago (2013), a Boston-based singer, poet, and visual artist, used social media to upload her music and other creations. Her music is posted on platforms like YouTube, and she released a bilingual single titled *Revelación* in November 2020, which depicts the historical traumas of minorities in North America. Santiago donates all her sales from her single to the non-profit organization Border Angels. An agency that operates primarily by volunteers to provide relief work. They try to prevent fatalities of individuals trying to pass the dangerous hot deserts into the United States and offer other resources along the US-Mexico border. Santiago's collaboration spans further with her hosting live streams with other musicians and visual artists whose passions are combating fascist politics and inequalities. For example, one guest Payal Kumar, a visual artist and illustrator, creates artwork focusing on community accountability and safety themes. Kuma believes that artists have essential roles throughout history – artists need to capture what the idea of change and revolution looks like in a creative form to remind the masses of what humanity should be striving towards (Ghanny, 2020).

Community Engagement Art Project. In California, Santa Ana College (SAC) proposed an art project that would honor and represent the colleges' undocumented immigrant students. One out of every ten of their students self-reported as undocumented (Guzman, 2019). The large portable mural, eight feet wide and eight feet tall vinyl banner, featured a monarch butterfly's wingspan, scientifically known as the Danaus Plexippus. This species migrates a round trip from Central America to North America (World Wild Life, 2021). The monarch butterfly has been widely used to symbolize immigration and is currently a familiar symbol and design behind immigration support (Bercaw & Arteaga, 2020; Garcia, 2019; Haro, 2017; F. Pérez, 2013).

According to Darren Hostetter, Assistant Professor in the Arts Division at SAC, the mural project was part of a college curriculum course titled Community and Public Art Mural I, II, and III. Designs were created by the students and voted on by the same students. The winning design owner, Tom Roberton, then became the project lead. As this projects' engagement blossomed, SAC students continued to participate in several other events on and off the college campus to support DACA and other immigration reform bills. The students participated in peaceful marches in Santa Ana. For a rally in Washington, D.C., somebody took one of their similar collaborative art pieces to the capitol and to the US Supreme Court to support the protection of DACA (D. Hostetter, personal communication, March 9, 2021).

Impacts Students' Experience. The Santa Ana College students and Mr. Hostetter continued working with Maribel Pineda, the counselor and coordinator for the UnDocu-Scholars Program. A specifically created program to provide services to currently enrolled undocumented students (Santa Ana College, 2021). The group was awarded

funds and held conversations about the possibility of more donations to the colleges'

mural program (D. Hostetter, personal communication, March 9, 2021). To gain financial

backing for future artivism projects is an amazing accomplishment. This result means the

financial donors were inspired by the art and the critical message behind it. Although

most importantly, it demonstrated the building of community support for undocumented

and DACA college students at SAC.

       College administrators, faculty, and staff members heavily influence all students.

These influential figures should be informed of the type of students on their campus and

what demographics make up their local community. In addition, to always be attentive to

their language when speaking or addressing undocumented students (removing words

like 'illegal'), publicly or privately. College administrators who actively act as advocates

and publicly endorse undocumented students establish more respect, trust, a more

welcoming environment, and a stronger sense of belonging for undocumented

undergraduates. These actions positively impact the students' mental health and overall

experience while attending school (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

       Building Stronger Relationships. The project opened a segue to meaningful

discussions with the class, between students, and the entire campus. Many students who

are undocumented or DACA recipients are afraid to reveal these identifiers about

themselves to others. Mr. Hostetter was surprised to learn how many of his students were

undocumented or DACA. He continued to emphasize empathy and the importance of

community building within his email:

       For several reasons, most did not feel comfortable with sharing this information

       previously with the whole class and myself. I would say that the participation [in]

this project opened up a dialog. … I would absolutely consider this to be part of

advocacy. We are making community-based artwork that supports our student

community and our greater local community off-campus. This [form of

community building] helps to create empathy among our students and also helps

with group cohesion in our classes. (D. Hostetter, personal communication, March

9, 2021)

Ms. Pineda is also quoted within Santa Ana Colleges' student-run media outlet,

stating she believes that art is a form of advocacy. She hopes community art projects like

the portable mural will increase awareness of immigration on college campuses,

especially on the campus she serves (Guzman, 2019). The experience of community-

based artmaking is a visual authentication towards their student body — signaling

belonging to the undergraduates. Lowering social isolation will reduce the symptoms of

depression, as mental health heavily influences every individuals' quality of life. The

practice of creating art as a community is a social exercise in group bonding with

substantial communal benefits. Creative group work produces feelings of trust and

confidence while simultaneously forging social bonds with others. It "builds a sense of

solidarity and collective identity" in a public forum of communication (Blatt-Gross,

2017, p. 56). Humans are social beings who crave connections and thrive when they are

in a healthy, supportive community. When individuals are unafraid of being themselves

and encouraged to embrace their truths, it will help them feel more accepted and build

self-esteem (Gilbert, 2019).

One Million Bones. The cause behind *One Million Bones* is the enthusiasm for

using artivism as an art therapy method to instill interest in the modality to create social

change and qualitatively research the value of reflection. As mentioned earlier,

McPherson and Mazza (2004) developed an undergraduate-level community practice

class for a social work program. The course focused on art activism using the project *One*

Million Bones, a US-based international art activism project. The project's premise is to

call public attention to problems of mass violence and genocide currently happening in

the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burma, and Sudan. Then, evaluate how the

exercise of self-reflection is essential to growing empathy. The students journaled and

wrote poetry throughout the semester as expressive responses that the researchers later

evaluated to find connections to deeper understanding. The bones created by the involved

participants, social work majors, represent victims of these brutal tragedies. The

discussions of these faraway tragedies allowed the conversation to promote more

awareness of local dark legacies of violence, such as the United States' history of slavery,

racism, and discrimination. The thousands of bones created are piled in a large heap to be

viewed publicly – community centers and city parks – to disrupt mundane activities and

gain media attention. The blatant display of handmade human bones is to spark reflection

within the participants or the viewers. The promotion of reflection is critical in all art

activism because, without reflection, there can be no change to be witnessed in society.

Most importantly, "[t]he arts offer hope in not only capturing the pain and strengths of

those afflicted, but in capturing hope for change" (p. 956).

    The Importance of Reflection. Sajnani (2012) argues that the most resilient

expressive truth is "the personal is political" (p. 187). The challenge is to have people

observe and reflect on their personal lives as reflections of their local culture, politics,

and values. The individuals' personal life has a reciprocal effect within the society and

impacts other community members. Therefore, Sajnani states that before any social change can come to fruition, individual change must first occur. Reflection can also be viewed as critical consciousness, which involves interpersonal questioning on three division levels. First, there is naming. This naming portion requires the mental listing of what dehumanizing problems are currently being lived (the treatment of immigrants within the US) and whether these troubles should be this way (no) versus how the issues should be ideally (have better immigration processes and nondiscriminatory perceptions). Secondly, the reflection process requires the individual to brainstorm why these problems exist (racism, harmful rhetoric, and minor bipartisan agreements), where to place blame (policymakers and public influencers), and dissect the individuals' role in the entire situation. Finally, the action factor explores solution-focused inquiries of what can be organized realistically to change the situation (policy lobbying and advocacy) and what has been done in the past (civil rights movements within the US) (Golub, 2005).

Artivism in/as Education. McPherson and Mazza (2004) used artivism "as a teaching tool [in] consonant with teaching strategies that seek to empower students as citizens" (p. 946) to continue to make advancements in human rights issues. During the course, McPherson and Mazza reevaluated what traditional social work issues were and redefined them as human rights issues, which was essential in making the concepts more relevant. "Creating the link between discrimination—a human rights violation that happens regularly in the US—with mass violence and other crimes against humanity was key to making the project relevant to students' social work education" (p. 948). The artivism project's collaborative artmaking resulted in enriching the students learning of the human rights issue. During one of their students' responses, they state that "the

experience of making bones was enriched … by the teaching she received and then, how after reflecting on her new knowledge, she was able to emotionally connect with the victims of mass violence" (p. 951). The students involved remarked that this project would have a lasting impact on their lives and the development of a global sense of self was a common theme. The use of artivism within college classrooms exposes students to more of these related tribulations impacting communities. Also, a separate study that evaluated the use of One Million Bones, "showed that social work students who participated in the arts activism project increased their *human rights* exposure by 36% over the course of the semester, and showed significantly higher levels of *human rights* engagement than similar students in a comparison classroom" (p. 955). This classroom project focused on the importance of reflection of the creators continuously through the semesters. It is an example of how even required by a college classroom assignment, participants creating art for a meaningful cause establishes a change – even if that change is within the participants. Crafting the bones while simultaneously learning the meaning behind the symbolism through multimedia outlets (videos from an internet source) are the combinational framework of what makes art activism into artivism. The project also contributed to online social media by creating a YouTube channel, OneMillionBones (2010).

"The arts offer hope in not only capturing the pain and strengths of those afflicted, but in capturing hope for change" (McPherson and Mazza, 2004, p. 956).

Words Can Be Weapons. Xie Yong (2020) has created multiple artivism exhibits that they label under *art as civic awareness*. One of the exhibitions, titled *Words Can Be Weapons*, focuses on how abusive and violent language spoken to one another

results "in mental and psychological violations and damage to others" (p. 16). Using their

native spoken language of Chinese, Yong uses Chinese characters to structure actual

weapons (pistols, knives, crossbows, etc.) as sculptures that viewers can hold, assemble,

and interact with at the art exhibit. Using the internet and social media, Yong created an

app for users to build these weapons virtually using Chinese characters in a puzzle form.

Once solved and completed, the screen will play a short documentary film. The video

consisted of interviews with juvenile offenders "who suffer[ed] from the 'violent

language' during growing up and the accumulative harm caused by language violence…

[impaired their] psychological growth" (p. 32). The exhibits' public physical space and

online interactive factors significantly influenced a large portion of the public's opinion.

On the first day of the exhibit's opening in 2014, it made headlines and continued to gain

coverage over the following years. The projects' premise began to infiltrate government

agency realms and various educational institutes. Seminars and workshops were

constructed to confront the social problem of verbal abuse. As a result, a movement

began to "refuse verbal violence" in Chinese society, particularly the verbal abuse of

children at home and school by essential adult figures. The immense public reaction of

advocation to condone verbal abuse helped develop Chinas' first "Anti-Domestic

Violence Law" in 2016. Yong (2020) stated that passing an anti-domestic violence law

proves that the interaction between art and social action can positively impact society's

development. "In summary, social challenges lead to art activities, and art activities react

to social growth" (p. 87).

     Missing Conversation. Xie Yongs' (2020) artivism project was tremendously

successful. Yong stated that "verbal abuse can be seen everywhere in daily life… People

mostly recognize and pay attention to the impact of physical violence, but the harm of language violence, especially in a domestic environment, is rarely discussed by Chinese society" (p. 17). Using various creative methods, Yong constructed artistic work (both physically and virtually) regarding the problem and displayed the finished products in a public space. The art brought the public to witness, learn, and engage in conversation about the issue of language violence, which transformed into a community advocacy action, leading to a bill passing within their government.

      Legalities of Being. Joanna Pérez (2018) offers examples of what is considered artivism projects within their visual study of protest art and its connection to undocumented immigrants living in the United States. One example is a multimedia video project titled *The Legalities of Being*; an illustrated spoken word performance on a social media video-sharing platform, YouTube (Dreamers Adrift, 2012). The essay described the complexity of harsh realities that impact undocumented families. The story focused on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which granted eligible undocumented young adults to obtain legal work authorization permits. It also protects them from deportation for two years at a time and is renewable. The limitation of DACA is that it still does not safeguard the DACA recipients' families, especially their parents. The multimedia video not only acted therapeutically within a form of art-as-therapy view, but it also raised the civic awareness of DACA recipients and their potential relief with obtaining this status. At the same time, it still leaves behind many stresses and worries about the uncertain futures of those ineligible to receive similar work permits like DACA. A significant concern is the fear of their parents or other family members' potentiality of deportation (J. Pérez, 2018; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). The

spoken word video creators and a growing collection of undocuactivists (undocumented activists) continue to push immigration reform bills with artistic demonstrations. Their use of the internet and social media has increased marginalized communities' visibility and provided counternarratives. With exclamations of "the need to advocate for the dignity, respect, and rights of undocumented immigrants" (J. Pérez, 2018, p. 42).

    Identity Crisis. The individuals who qualify for DACA came to the United States before their sixteenth birthday (USCIS, 2021). These individuals were children when they traveled illegally across the border. More than likely, they did so without a choice. Some were so young that they do not remember the journey. Others do not realize they are not an American citizen until they graduate high school. These individuals struggle with their identity and search for answers to what it means to belong in the United States. In many ways, these individuals may feel American because they grew up here and were educated here. All they have ever known and experienced has been here. Regardless of this actuality, they are demoralized by their limited possibilities, as stated by Carmen Valdez (2019). These individuals quickly learned and internalized that they were unwelcomed, undesirable, and unworthy of being American citizens. The dehumanizing narratives about immigrants have been demonstrated by American politics, especially during the Trump administration's attempt to end DACA. Trump, his administration, and the majority of the Republican party consistently used harmful rhetoric to demonize undocumented youth as criminals, a threat to the country, and a gang of people that should be considered dangerous. To be surrounded by these many forms of hate-filled messages throughout a lifetime, the targeted individuals will have mental health issues because of the traumatic stress – leading to feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and

depression. The common themes that impact these adolescents are social isolation,

internalized self-hatred, and shame (Valdez, 2019; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

<div align="center">**Discussion**</div>

While there are many different forms of art and how it can be a part of activism,

two themes are always present in modern times. One is the use of artivism and its online

capabilities, and the second is the community's growth and building stronger social ties.

Online and Social Media

More people were online more often during the COVID-19 pandemic, which

aided in more collaborations. Especially since the majority of the artivism projects shared

their message using the social media platform YouTube. Since videos can be easy to

create and be constructed in multiple ways, many forms of art can be used. For example,

the Boston-based singer, Genie Santiago (2013), shared her music; McPherson and

Mazza (2004) had their students watch videos as they crafted the bones for their project;

and The Dreamers Adrift (2012) YouTube channel continues to upload videos about

DACA and immigration.

Other individuals used different social media platforms for collaborations. For

example, the knitting patterns of "pussyhats with cat-ears" with the instructions

(Women's rights, 2019), Santiago (2013) hosted live streams on Twitch with other

artivists, EC (n.d) uploaded music parodies to TikTok, and Yong (2020) created an app

for users to build weapons virtually using Chinese characters in a puzzle form.

Community Growth

The growth of the community and the bonds between people and individuals were

seen as the second central theme. Mr. Hostetter from Santa Ana College expressed how

their community art project opened a segue to meaningful discussions with the class,

between students, and the entire campus. Yongs' (2020) art brought the public to witness,

learn, and engage in conversation about the issue of language violence, which

transformed into a community advocacy action, leading to a bill passing within their

government. Even those who wished to stay anonymous in their support still contributed

to community growth. For example, the Instagram account, @artistsforgeorge, uploads

artistic portraits of George Floyd. The construction and printing of the artwork were their

way of contributing and showing support for the Black Lives Matter movement and

opposing police brutality while remaining anonymous (Schonfeld, 2020).

People were drawn in by the gravitational pull of art as the foundation of support.

I view artists freely permitting others to use their creations, whether knitting or poster

designs, as a form of donation of support. Contributions go beyond fiscal matters when it

comes to social movements. People's time, energy, and effort output demonstrate their

genuine belief in what they are doing and the change they are trying to make. Then for

those artists to see their work used during protests or other favorable events, I could only

imagine them feeling honored that it was displayed. The created art gave a directional

space for others to comment and engage with one another on social media. Very quickly,

people began collaborating over new ideas and brainstorming potential designs, events,

or even the organization of a peaceful protest. The use of social media is a direct

implication of how a community can expand and grow virtually. Some supporters are

faceless, and others are only known by their art.

Impact on Art Therapy Practice & Future Research

Art therapists know that their clients create art based on the current events in their lives. Sometimes, these events are related to the social hardships they are facing. Therefore, it is critical for expressive therapists to recognize and be vigilant of what is happening within the community, nation, and world, as it will have repercussions on various groups. In addition, symbolism is a human thing to do when creating art. Therefore, I propose that art therapists become knowledgeable of the history of repeated symbols as it can be a pivotal moment of understanding with the client.

As the literature grows more regarding the spread of social movements virtually, it is essential to acknowledge it under the recognized name of artivism. This adoption of name recognition will then limit confusion and create an expandable database collection of research that can become more easily assessable.

Limitations

Two primary limitations of this paper are my personal experiences and the method I used to gather resources. I am a woman of color who is the spouse of a DACA recipient, and as a couple, we experienced hardship relating to immigration policies. As a result of these life experiences, it greatly influenced the sources I used within this literature review as I more often chose authors who were a person of color and/or undocumented. I was also more empathic to their perspectives than to other authors who did not have personal experiences of being a subject of social injustices. I also have higher expectations of allies to become the backbone of all the social justice movements due to my belief that they need to be the infantry in causes. Finally, the articles used within this paper were obtained from the online database available to the students at

Lesley University. I am aware that there are many other documents of artivism that I either did not include or could not access at the time of my research.

Conclusion

This literature review explored various examples of artivism, the combination of art and activism, and how each used the online capabilities of the internet and social media: Much like McPherson and Mazza's (2004) project of One Million Bones or Xie Yongs' (2020) exhibit of Words Can Be Weapons. In the future, I hope to see more artivism projects like One Million Bones because they involve a larger group to construct and teach the group simultaneously. Words Can Be Weapons was created by Xie Yong with specific designs created by him, even though he outsourced others to make the mobile app and other parts of the exhibit. I believe it did not reach its full potential without the collaboration of the community in creation. However, I mean no disrespect, as the aftermath of the community reaction was substantial. The findings show that artivism was grown from art in activism or art activism as early as the 1400s and early 1500s, known as 'political print,' which worked effectively in sharing messages through imagery due to the large portion of the population being illiterate.

The continual recognition of what is and what is not artivism will aid in compiling various research studies into one databank of search terms for future analyses. In addition, as the literature grows, there is hope that more awareness will be brought to the public and people who are in positions of power regarding the importance of art creation and its influences on helping those who are being disenfranchised. Hopefully, this literature review demonstrates the untapped potential and expansive flexibility for collaboration and community connectedness within artivism, especially as technology

advances. I look forward to celebrating all the creative and unique opportunities the

twenty-first century will open for upcoming artivists and artivism.

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