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I, Abbey L Klever, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication.

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**#StandwithPP: An Analysis of Planned Parenthood's Use of Facebook**

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# #StandwithPP: An Analysis of Planned Parenthood's Use of Facebook

A thesis submitted to the  
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**Abstract:** This thesis uses an iterative approach to interpret and compare the use of Facebook by Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action pages to engage with community stakeholders in the midst, and following an aggressive presidential election. This analysis uses Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) information-community-action functions of social media as a theoretical framework to interpret and compare the strategic ways the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages engage with community stakeholders and attempts to understand how Planned Parenthood uses Facebook to confront and deflect the organizations legitimacy issues.

**Keywords:** *Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Planned Parenthood Action; Facebook; social media; communicative functions; community stakeholder engagement; nonprofit organizations*



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## **Introduction**

There are nearly two million nonprofit organizations registered in the United States (Heath, 2010). These nonprofit organizations play a vital role by working to provide benefits for individuals and groups, with the purpose of working in the interest of the public (Weisbrod, 1988). Social media platforms have allowed organizations to provide timely information updates and engage with community stakeholders about important topics in ways beyond the capacity of an organizational website. The increasing reliance on social media use by nonprofit organizations to communicate with community stakeholders marks it as a significant area for research by communication scholars.

As nonprofit organizations increasingly rely on social media as a platform to communicate with the public, it is important for scholars to work to interpret how these organizations are using these social media platforms and to study the strategies the organizations are using in the messages they send to the general public. A comprehensive study that analyzes Planned Parenthood's use of Facebook will contribute to media, social movement, and feminist literature. Planned Parenthood is a highly significant organization due to the current political climate in the United States. Planned Parenthood is a health care provider, educator, and advocate for women's reproductive health. The organization delivers sex education, reproductive health care, and information to people worldwide. The organization risks policy and funding changes due to the 2016 presidential election results. The results of the presidential election leave Planned Parenthood at risk in their ability to serve as a hub for accessible reproductive health care to women.

Planned Parenthood has taken to social media, including Facebook, to communicate with the public to advocate for public policies that secure women's rights. As a communication



scholar, it is important to study strategies of the organization to understand the deep and complex use of social media for advocacy in the United States. In this study, I examine the messages posted by Planned Parenthood on their Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Fund Facebook pages in order to gain a better understanding of how they are using the platforms to educate the public and advocate for women's reproductive health rights.

Planned Parenthood has numerous social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. On Facebook, Planned Parenthood has several active pages, including many at the local level and two at the national level. As of 2012, Planned Parenthood Action Fund and Planned Parenthood Federation of America employs 342 people in New York and Washington D.C. and 40 of these employees work in the communications division for the organization with 18 employees controlling the organizations' social media accounts (Perry, 2012). Studying the use of social media and the messages constructed by organizations is highly significant as nonprofit organizations begin to rely heavily on social media applications to interact with community members. In order to investigate this further, it is important to examine relevant literature surrounding Planned Parenthood's background, nonprofit advocacy organizations and the current political climate.

### Background

Nonprofit organizations can fall under a variety of classifications in the United States. The range of activities that an organization is allowed to engage in depends on the classification that the specific nonprofit organization falls under. Planned Parenthood's nonprofit status affects the way they are able to respond to the current political context. In response to the current political context, the organization has taken to social media to communicate with the public. In this

section, I explain Planned Parenthood's nonprofit status, the current political context, and their use of social media.

### *Planned Parenthood Non-Profit Status*

Nonprofits are extremely complex organizations that must follow strict government regulations depending on the classification of the organization. The most common classification for nonprofits is 501(c)(3), which cannot endorse or oppose political candidates running for public office, or donate to political campaigns (International Revenue Service, 2017). According to Anheier (2014), nonprofit organizations can engage in "unlimited advocacy involving education, research, and dissemination of information about an issue, but they are permitted to lobby only on a limited basis" (p. 144). If nonprofit organizations engage in inappropriate lobbying, the organizations risk losing their tax-exempt status (Anheier, 2014). In contrast, nonprofit organizations whose missions fall under either the social welfare category or local associations of employees are classified as 501(c)(4) organizations can engage in political lobbying if the specific cause corresponds with the organizations purpose (International Revenue Service, 2017). These 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations main objectives are often highly concerned with policy change that aligns with their organizational mission (Mason, 2015).

Since the regulations that nonprofit organizations are restrictive, these organizational structures can be particularly dense and complicated. In order to adhere to regulations, some organizations establish entirely separate organizations under different nonprofit classifications to cover additional roles for the cause in collaboration with one another. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (also known simply as Planned Parenthood) is a 501(c)(3) organization, meaning the organization cannot endorse a political candidate or donate to a campaign (International Revenue Service, 2017). Planned Parenthood Action Fund is a 501(c)(4)

organization, meaning Planned Parenthood Action Fund is able to participate in lobbying and certain political activities, as long as the cause matches with the organization's mission and that political activity is not the organization's primary purpose (International Revenue Service, 2017).

Separating the two organizations allows Planned Parenthood Action Fund to engage in political activities that Planned Parenthood cannot, like legislative advocacy, voter education, and grassroots advocacy (Planned Parenthood Action Fund, 2016). Due to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund being classified as two separate organizations, each of the respective organizations has their own national Facebook page. It is important to consider both of the Facebook pages and compare the communicative functions being used on the separate Planned Parenthood organization pages. Comparing the content on the two Facebook pages will allow me to interpret the messages being published by the organizations pages and better understand how the organizations are using the two pages differently.

### *Current Political Context*

Feminist movement organizations have a longstanding history in the United States. Activists have focused on an array of women's issues in addition to reproductive rights, such as the right to vote, equal pay, maternity leave, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. Feminist activist organizations like Planned Parenthood have been working tirelessly since the early 1960s to promote women's rights, health, and equality (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). The current risk Planned Parenthood and other feminist organizations face due to the political climate in the United States has caused the organizations to develop advocacy campaigns to help fight back against right wing politicians.

Planned Parenthood as a whole faces a legitimacy crisis and a threat to their mission following the 2016 presidential election. The current political climate leaves Planned Parenthood vulnerable to attacks from conservatives in an effort to challenge the organization's abortion politics (Russo & Denious, 2005). Pro-life advocates lobby for the defunding of reproductive health care organizations like Planned Parenthood as long as they provide abortion services. Over 40% of Planned Parenthood's funding comes from federal, state, and local capital, the majority coming from public health programs like Medicaid, which adds up to about \$553 million of the organization's annual budget (Evans, 2017). This means the majority of Planned Parenthood's budget comes from government funding, and without this funding the organization would be unlikely to survive on private donors. A minimum of 60% of Planned Parenthood patients rely on public health programs like Medicaid, and the majority of federal funding comes from Medicaid reimbursements from preventative health care (Berg, 2017). Because Medicaid patients rely on Planned Parenthood for reproductive health care, excluding Planned Parenthood from this funding would not benefit taxpayers; rather it is estimated that defunding Planned Parenthood would actually increase Medicaid spending over a 10-year period by over \$650 million because Medicaid patients would have to seek preventative care from other clinics (Covert, 2015).

Planned Parenthood faces a serious legitimacy crisis due to the conservative nature of the incoming Trump Administration, and the President's voiced commitment to completely defund Planned Parenthood as long as the organization's health clinics continue to offer abortion services to women, although only 3% of Planned Parenthood's services consist of abortion care (Hellmann, 2017). Vice President Mike Pence worked during his time in Congress to introduce legislation that would ban abortion-providers from receiving federal funding (Hellmann, 2017).

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, President Trump reinstated a policy that originated from the Reagan Administration that cuts American foreign aid to any health providers overseas who discuss abortion in their health care and family planning services (Sengupta, 2017). In the midst of the current political climate and legitimacy crisis, it is a vital time for Planned Parenthood to engage with community stakeholders to gain the support of the public and to keep the public informed about attacks on women's reproductive rights in America and abroad.

In addition, Planned Parenthood faced a serious threat to their legitimacy following the release of videos by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) that accused Planned Parenthood of illegally selling baby parts. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 CMP released videos that implicated Planned Parenthood employees with the illegal sale of fetal tissue (Somashekhar & Paquette, 2015). Although the videos were proven to be misleading and deceptive, the release of the videos still caused an uproar from anti-abortion activist groups causing Planned Parenthood to face a serious legitimacy crisis and threat to their mission (Brandhorst & Jennings, 2016). Even though the videos were proven to be false representations of the organization, and the producers behind the release of the fake videos were indicted, Planned Parenthood's legitimacy was still called into question because the release of the videos opened up a platform for the opposition to question the organization's validity and created a clear divide among politicians regarding the funding of the organization (Fernandez, 2016).

Following the release of undercover CMP videos, Republican politicians and anti-abortion activists who oppose federal funding of Planned Parenthood were vocal about their concerns regarding federal funding of the organization. Joni Ernst, a current United States Senator and at the time an Iowa State Senator who said, "as a mother and grandmother, I believe the gravity of Planned Parenthood's callous and morally reprehensible behavior cannot be

ignored. I am committed to defending life because protecting the most vulnerable is an important measure of any society” (Ernst et al., 2015 p. 10).

While Planned Parenthood faced attacks from Republican politicians, supporters of the organization spoke up to defend the need for Planned Parenthood for American women.

Democrat and United States Senator, Harry Reid, was among the politicians who spoke out in response to Republican attacks on Planned Parenthood at the time saying, “defunding Planned Parenthood would limit American women’s access to critical health services such as contraception, breast and cancer screenings, and well-women visits” (Ernst et al., 2015 p. 11).

United States Senator Elizabeth Warren also responded to the attacks:

Let’s be really clear about something. The Republican scheme to defund Planned Parenthood is not some sort of surprised response to a highly edited video. Nope. The Republican vote to defund Planned Parenthood is just one more piece of a deliberate, methodological, orchestrated, right-wing attack on women’s rights, and I am sick and tired of it. Women everywhere are sick and tired of it. The American people are sick and tired of it (Ernst et al., 2015 p. 19).

Anti-abortion activists seek to defund Planned Parenthood, although abortions only make up 3% of the clinics work, disregarding the reproductive health services provided at Planned Parenthood clinics to underserved women across the country (Devi, 2015).

According to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), “Reproductive health ... implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so” (ICPD, 1994, n.p.). The transformation of family planning programs has become an important objective of the women’s reproductive rights movement, “... programs have generally

been characterized by poor quality of care, limited choice of methods offered, and lack of attention to critical issues such as sexual coercion and the risk of sexually transmitted infections that are fundamental to women's health and rights" (Murphy & Ringheim, 2001, p. 54). The relationship between health rights and human rights is the central aspect of the feminist movement and is the core of modern-day activism (Abeyesekera, 1997).

Feminists have historically emphasized the importance of the right to accessible universal health care by highlighting the message that safe and legal abortion are individual rights (Hoffman, 2008). Activists argue that the right to health is a human right (Corrêa, 1997). Feminist movements have aligned with the need for universal health care, by articulating the importance of the ability for a woman to access safe and legal abortions in the health care system as a key demand (Berer, 2000). Women who do not live near an abortion provider or women who do not have health coverage must consider cost and travel as factors required in obtaining an abortion (Shaw, 2013). Prior to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), our health care system in the United States left nearly 17 million women without health insurance, obstructing women's access to reproductive health care (McGovern, 2007). The reproductive rights of women have not been met until all women can safely terminate a pregnancy in an accessible clinical setting. Berer (1997) says, "My most aiding ambition... has been to see abortion as a woman's right, safe and legal, everywhere in the world" (p. 20). While abortion is a key issue in women's reproductive health rights, women's health centers like Planned Parenthood provide more than just access to safe and legal abortions – they provide the means for women to have safe sexual interactions (Rutherford, 2016). For this reason, organizations that advocate and provide women's reproductive health care must be strong advocates that fight to strengthen the

legitimacy of reproductive care as health care in order to keep funding clinics like Planned Parenthood that provide reproductive health care for underserved women around America.

Due to the current political context and Planned Parenthood's history of questioned legitimacy, as well as the organizations fear of what to come, there is a vital need for Planned Parenthood to communicate and create dialogue with community stakeholders. The organization has relied heavily on the use of social media, including Facebook, to provide information and advocate for the organization and women's right to reproductive health care.



## Chapter 1

### Literature Review

Nonprofit organizations like Planned Parenthood are complex in nature. In this section, I examine relevant literature on nonprofit advocacy organizations, the use of social media by nonprofit organizations, Planned Parenthood's legitimacy struggles, and the functions of social media messaging.

#### *Nonprofit Advocacy Organizations*

Activist organizations are vital to study in communication and public relations fields because of their unique relationship building needs with community stakeholders (Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001). According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), advocacy involves “serving the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate” (Public Relations Society of America Code of Ethics, 2000, p. 2). Nonprofit organizations can serve as arbitrators between the government and constituents. Through lobbying and advocacy efforts, nonprofit organizations have the potential to greatly improve the lives of community members by contributing to the democratic process (Guo & Musso, 2007). These nonprofit organizations can advocate for people whose interests are underrepresented in public policy, by educating people about policy issues, and by providing constituents with a chance to actually participate in the public policy process itself (Yoshioka, 2014; Freeman 2009). According to Ruth Edgett (2002), advocacy is defined as “the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on- or accept the point of view of- the individual, the organization, or the idea” (p. 1). Lobbying, according to Anheier (2014), refers to “attempts to influence specific legislation

directly or indirectly either through contact with legislators or employees or by mobilizing the public to do so” (p. 144). Both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations are permitted to engage in advocacy activity, but only a portion of organizational activity can involve lobbying for 501(c)(3) organizations without risk of losing tax-exempt status (Anheier, 2014). Although the terms lobbying and advocacy are often used interchangeable, they are not completely the same. Advocacy refers to “nonprofit organizations advocate on their own behalf, they seek to affect some aspect of society, whether they appeal to individuals about their behavior, employers about their rules, or the government about its laws” (Connecticut Association of Nonprofits Advocacy/Lobbying Toolkit, 2003, p. 1). Lobbying, on the other hand refers “specifically to advocacy efforts that attempt to influence legislation” (Connecticut Association of Nonprofits Advocacy/Lobbying Toolkit, 2003, p. 1).

Nonprofit organizations have capacities to represent and serve the public and their constituents (Guo & Musso, 2007). Public interest non-profits aim to serve community members by voicing their concerns to policy makers and government officials, while also advocating for the organizations’ own initiatives regarding certain policy issues (Yoshioka, 2014). Although nonprofit organizations main function is to serve the public, advocacy organizations can often be viewed as controversial due to an increased likelihood of biased or one-sided representation of issues (Auger, 2013; Mason 2015; Freeman 2009). One of the key strengths of a democratic system is that individuals have the ability to join together to promote their ideas and values, and nonprofit organizations are the primary means for individuals to do so, therefore advocacy is a principle function of US nonprofit organizations (Child & Gronbjerg, 2007). Nonprofit advocacy organizations can contribute to democratic representation by educating the general public about certain policy issues, it is important for the organization to avoid misusing their education

efforts, by presenting all sides of an issue, or else they can actually harm the Democratic representation process (Yoshioka, 2014).

### *Nonprofits Use of Social Media*

The increasing use of social media by nonprofit organizations can be explained as a response to the inability of nonprofit organizations to use their websites as a strategic and interactive tool for community stakeholder engagement to its highest potential (Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003). This emerging use of social networking sites like Facebook provide organizations with a platform to interact with key publics and community stakeholders on topics of interest on a level that organization websites are unable to do (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). However, our overall understanding of how and why nonprofit organizations are adopting social media technologies is scarce, due to the unique aspects of nonprofit organizations and their functions, but also due to a lack of research on specific type of organizations adaptation of social media (Lewis, 2005). The research that has been conducted on social media has focused on the operation and use of the tool, rather than looking at what attracts nonprofit organizations to using social media and what communicative strategies the organizations choose to use (Nah & Saxton, 2013).

Social media sites can be used as a platform to provide timely and relevant information about important issues to community stakeholders (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). Social media can also provide a space for relationship-building with community stakeholders, “these tools can be harnessed to build stronger relationships with publics such as volunteers, the media, and the community” (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011, p. 41) Social media tools could actually revolutionize advocacy in the way organizations communicate with stakeholders and decision

makers (Burger, 2015). Social media platforms provide a space where hundreds or thousands can regularly contribute to the conversation in real time with threaded dialogue (Heath, 2010).

Organizations all use social media for different purposes. Guo and Saxton (2014) found that nonprofit advocacy organizations used Twitter to provide information to stakeholders, build an online community, and then call that community to action in their messages. In contrast, Waters and Jamal (2011) argue that nonprofit organizations mainly use Twitter as a means for one-way messaging, meaning that organizations are using the platform to share information rather than to build relationships and a sense of community.

The differing extent of how organizations use social media leaves scholars questioning what the best practice of social media looks like for nonprofit organizations. Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009) explained that organizations often use social media sites differently, because many nonprofit organizations recognize the rapidly expanding use of social media and want to join the trend, but the organizations do not necessarily take advantage of all of the options available to them to build relationships and move their organization forward.

Organizational utilization of social media has been explained as being dependent on an organization's preexisting resources and the capacity of the organization's web capabilities (Hackler & Saxton, 2007). Pressure from external stakeholders has also been found to be a predictor of nonprofit organizations' implementation of social media technologies, organizations that count on public donations have been found to more heavily rely on social media platforms than organizations that rely on government funding (Nah & Saxton, 2013). The utilization of social media by nonprofit organizations is complex, but the use of social media is vital for an organization like Planned Parenthood, who faces a legitimacy crisis.

Social Media Usage and Public Relations Models

An organization's social media usage also likely depends on its approach to public relations more generally. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the four models of public relations include the publicity model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model, or the two-way symmetrical model. The publicity model uses one-way communication with persuasion and manipulation characteristics to get the intended audience to behave in a certain way desired by the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The public information model uses mainly one-way communication from the organization to the audience to spread information about the organization and current happenings (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The two-way asymmetrical model is similar to the publicity model, except it uses two-way communication, rather than one-way messaging to get the intended audience to behave in a certain way desired by the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Finally, the two-way symmetrical model uses two-way communication to achieve mutual understanding to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict, and promote mutual understanding between the organization and the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). With the growing popularity of social media, organizations have begun to rely on social media sites as a platform for public relations, therefore it is significant to note what models of public relations are being utilized by organizations through their social media use. Specifically, it is significant to study with organizations that face legitimacy concerns, as they rely on social media as public relations tools to combat backlash from legitimacy concerns. The following section provides a review of literature on organizational legitimacy and the specific legitimacy concerns Planned Parenthood has faced recently.

### *Planned Parenthood's Legitimacy*

According to Heath (2010), “activists and their targets perform a legitimacy dance, each questioning the other’s issues, motives, and right to exist” (p. 401). Planned Parenthood is a reproductive health advocacy organization that frequently faces backlash from anti-abortion activists and conservative policy causing the organization to continually face a threat to their legitimacy. Sociopolitical legitimacy “refers to whether or not key stakeholders and the general public accept a venture as right or acceptable given social norms” (Brandhorst & Jennings, 2016, p. 724). An organization must have a legitimate goal that is being carried out in a legitimate way that is accepted by the public. When an organization is not following the social norms that the general public expects, the organization may be confronted with a legitimacy gap. The legitimacy gap is “the perceived difference between an institution’s performance and a society’s expectations for right and proper performance” (Sethi, 1977, n.p.). Perceived legitimacy from the public is vital in order for an organization to entice support and resources (Alajoutsijarvi, Juusola & Siltaoja, 2015).

The organization’s legitimacy crisis means that Planned Parenthood must seek out political allies for representation that can speak with others to negotiate on reproductive rights policies (Ávila, 1997). Historically, Democrats have been pro-choice, and Republicans have been pro-life, and voters have reported this as a core issue considered when choosing between candidates in political elections (Kretschmer, 2014). Politicians like Hillary Clinton have used the public memory of feminist social movements to demonstrate America’s promise as a democracy and continued dedication to push policy that upholds the democratic promise for women and their reproductive rights (Dubriwny, 2013).

In contrast, the Bush administration in 2001 held a conservative opposition stance, which required United Nations advocates to spend most of their time and efforts protecting agreements that were already in place concerning reproductive rights, rather than working to advance these policies (Germain & Liljestrand, 2009). Due to the conservative incoming Trump administrations threat to defund Planned Parenthood, it is an important time for Planned Parenthood and other feminist organizations to utilize social media tools to communicate with community stakeholders to advocate for women's reproductive rights.

### *Information, Community, Action Functions*

Prior research has looked into nonprofit organizations and their use of social media, specifically at organizations' use of Twitter. While there have been several attempts by researchers to code and analyze tweet categorizations, there has been very little research that attempts to code Facebook messages (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). There is also a lack of research that has been conducted that comparatively analyzes different types of nonprofit organizations communicative messages on social media, and a deficiency of research has been conducted on Planned Parenthood and their use of Facebook.

Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) conducted a content analysis of 73 nonprofit organizations twitter posts between November 8<sup>th</sup> to December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The goal of their research was to analyze the content of the organizations' tweets in order to determine the communicative function that the tweets serve. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) analyzed data gathered from Twitter with a 12-category code scheme; each tweet was assigned a code from the scheme based on what was considered the tweet's main communicative purpose.

The 12 types of tweets that emerged from the Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) coding process were then grouped into categories to explain the three major functions of the tweets analyzed:

information, community, and action. The information function contained a single category which included any tweets that simply spread relevant information about the organization and their activities to community members. The community function included the categories *giving recognition and thanks*, *acknowledgment of current and local events*, *responses to reply messages*, and *response solicitation*. The action function included the categories *promoting an event*, *donation appeal*, *selling a product*, *call for volunteers and employees*, *join another site or vote for organization*, and *learn how to help*.

The research argued that an organization uses social media to its full dialogic potential when they use a combination of information, community and, action functions in their messages. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) called for the need to test if the functions are used in a hierarchical order with the ultimate goal being to get community stakeholders to actually do something for the organization (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Full dialogic potential, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), would include “opportunities for direct interactivity, two-way exchange of information, network creation, and public, open dialogue” (p. 345). The information-community-action scheme proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) moves beyond the prior research on organizations social media use that proposed a simple information/dialogue dichotomy, by calling attention to the “action” function of social media. The action function of social media can be linked back to Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) two-way symmetrical model of public relations where it takes a step further than previous models by using two-way communication to negotiate with publics and promote mutual understanding between the organization and the community.

Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) believe that the categories of social media functions are generalizable beyond Twitter to other types of social media like Facebook, therefore I used their research on social media functions as an analytic framework to conduct my research on how



Planned Parenthood is using two of the organizations Facebook pages to communicate with community stakeholders. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) conducted their research with a quantitative approach, so it is important to understand qualitatively how organizations fulfill the different communicative functions in their discourse. Therefore, this study addressed the following research questions throughout the analysis:

*Research Question 1:* How does Planned Parenthood Federation of America (a 501(c)(3) organization) and Planned Parenthood Action (a 501(c)(4) organization) use Facebook to engage with community stakeholders?

*Research Question 2:* What communicative functions are the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages utilizing in their messaging?

*Research Question 3:* Comparatively, how are the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages being used differently?

## **Methodology**

### *Data Collection*

For the purpose of this study, I compared Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages. As established previously, the two nonprofit organizations are classified differently, therefore they are held to different government regulations. I evaluated the communicative functions of the messages published on the Planned Parenthood Facebook pages to examine and compare how they are using the two different pages. I used an interpretive lens to understand the functionality of the Facebook pages and the messages being published by the organization. By analyzing this data, I seek to understand how Planned Parenthood and similar organizations use the social media platform to engage with community members.

My corpus for this study consisted of posts published on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page and posts published on the Planned Parenthood Action page during the time period of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The two pages are very active on Facebook, so I narrowed my collection to understand this particular political time period while also being manageable for the purpose of this study. This time period is important to examine because it contains messages published during the 2016 presidential election campaign, as well as messages published in reaction to the contentious presidential election that has left the organization vulnerable. I collected my data by downloading the Facebook posts directly from each of the organizations Facebook pages as PDF documents to code. My analysis consists of a total of 67 posts published by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page and 238 posts published on the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Facebook page during the time period of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 through January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

At times, both of the Planned Parenthood Facebook pages share articles from outside sources. For the purpose of this study, I have limited my click level to strictly staying on the organizations' Facebook pages, and therefore I am not analyzing each article they share for content. Rather, when the organization shares outside articles, I only analyzed the text published by the Planned Parenthood organization on Facebook about the information they have shared.

### *Data Analysis*

My analysis of the two Facebook pages consists of an iterative approach which is a reflexive process that allows me to visit the data while also drawing from emergent insights throughout the analysis process (Tracy, 2012). I begin by looking at my corpus of texts and categorizing the data based on the information, community and action functions of social media proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). I started by using the communicative functions found

in Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) research as my analytic framework to analyze Planned Parenthood's messaging on both their Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Facebook page. I have selected this framework because it outlines specific functions that nonprofit organizations can use in their messaging to engage with community stakeholders on social media platforms.

I analyzed my corpus of texts by coding each post individually for the information, community, and action communicative functions of social media. I began the coding process by using the 12 code categories used by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). For the primary cycle of coding, I coded my data based on the 12 categories explained previously. Using a constant comparative method (Tracy, 2013) to adapt the Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) code scheme based on themes I found throughout my data. I removed the two categories of *selling a product and responses to reply messages* from Lovejoy and Saxton due to inapplicability to my data. I noted themes throughout my data that did not fit under the code scheme and created additional code categories to fit the data. Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) information function only consisted of a single category, which comprised of all posts that contained any information relevant to the stakeholders of the organization. I found varying forms of information being distributed by Planned Parenthood throughout my data, and created three categories for the information function: *organizational purpose, education, and political climate*. Finally, I added the category *dialogue and storytelling* to the community function for posts that served the purpose of telling stories of people's experience with the organization and building dialogue among community members. My final codebook (shown in Figure 1) comprised of the following 13 functions under the three communicative functions.

Each individual post published on the two Facebook pages in the corpus is coded and assigned any of the information, community, action functions that are applicable to the post. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) only assigned one code per post, but I find this is a limitation in a qualitative study, considering one post can carry multiple functions. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) analyzed Tweets, which are short and simple messages. Facebook messages are often more complex than Tweets, thus it is appropriate to allow for more than one code to be applied to each post throughout this analysis. Therefore, I choose to apply any of the codes applicable to each post, rather than restricting my analysis to one code per post. I coded every sentence of a post by assigning the most appropriate category. Nearly all of the posts had more than one sentence, often with more than one category coded for each post. To address the differences between the two Facebook pages, I counted the amount of times each function was used in posts on the pages to gain insights.

**Figure 1** Coding Categories

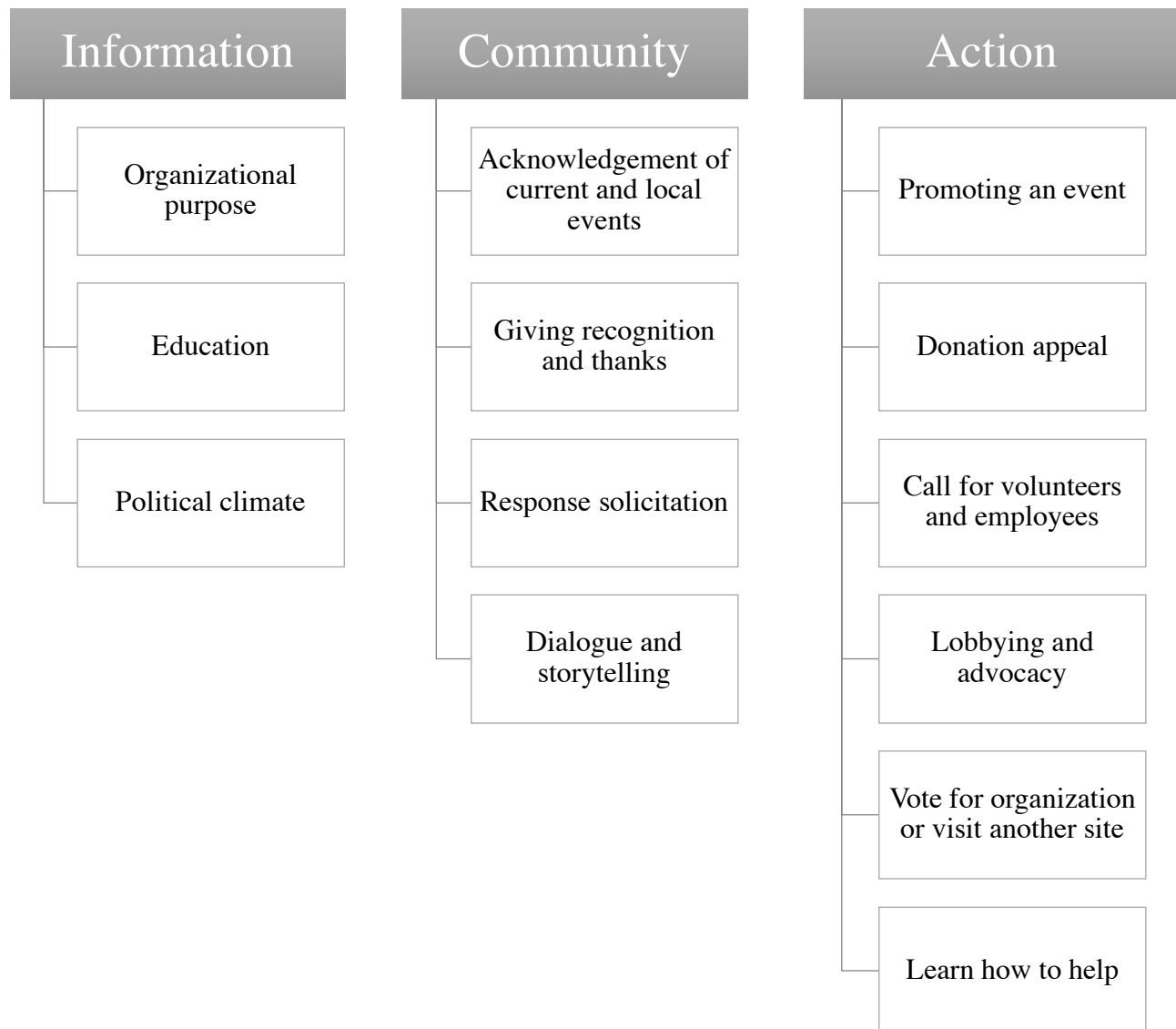


Table 1 provides a representative sample of a post that fits into each of the categories, including Lovejoy and Saxton’s categories as well as those I added through the inductive analysis.

Table 1 shows that 13 post types were found through the coding of the two Facebook pages. These 13 post types were grouped into three main overarching functions: information, community, and action as proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). The “information” function consists of posts that are used to distribute information about Planned Parenthood as an organization, to educate community stakeholders on current information and happenings. The second function, “community,” consists of posts that are meant to strengthen the organizations’ community ties and to create dialogue to build relationships among community stakeholders. The third main category is the “action” function, which consists of posts that serve the purpose of actually getting community stakeholders to take a specific action by actually doing something. This study is unique from Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) because of the added three categories under the information function. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) used one broad category for information, but my analysis showed differing types of information being used in the posts. I therefore added three information categories based on my inductive analysis, including *organization purpose*, *education*, and *political climate*. This study also added a category to the community function by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). The category added to the community function was *dialogue and storytelling*, which included posts that were used to tell stories of community members interactions with the organization and to promote open dialogue through the use of storytelling.

**Table 1** Facebook Post Functions

The \* symbol represents categories added by Klever through the inductive analysis.

Category	Planned Parenthood Federation of America Example	Planned Parenthood Action Example
<b>Information</b>		
Organization purpose *	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/13/17: Creating a healthier world for everyone: this is who we are --&gt;</i> <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2gyw1R2">http://p.ppfa.org/2gyw1R2</a> #WeArePP	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 12/24/16: Here's 100 reasons Planned Parenthood matters to you to celebrate its 100 years:</i> <a href="http://ppaction.org/100reasons">http://ppaction.org/100reasons</a>
Education *	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/26/16: Got questions about sexual health and relationships? We're here to help!</i> #WeArePP <i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/21/16: Get answers to your questions about pregnancy, birth control, emergency contraception, and abortion. Live-chat with a health educator:</i> <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2hx5TCC">http://p.ppfa.org/2hx5TCC</a>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 12/14/16: Our president just protected health care for millions of Americans- including Planned Parenthood Patients. Now the fight is on to make sure those protections don't get rolled back! Here's what you need to know about the Obama administration's new rule, and the flight ahead:</i> <a href="http://ppact.io/2gByzJk">http://ppact.io/2gByzJk</a>
Political climate *	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/16/16: Three cheers for the Obama Administration! It just finalized a new rule that protects health care for the 4 million people who rely on Title X- ensuring people with low incomes or without health insurance can access birth control, cancer screenings, and other care at any qualified provider, including Planned Parenthood health centers. But the fight isn't over. The next administration could attach these new protections:</i> <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2gSGdUt">http://p.ppfa.org/2gSGdUt</a> #StandWithPP	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 12/16/16: Infuriating: Oklahoma passed a law requiring public facilities to give out information to create "an abortion-free society." So how are they doing it? Providing sex education and family planning? Of course not! They're forcing bathrooms in restaurants, hospitals, school and more to post signs that shame and demean pregnant women considering abortion.</i>
<b>Community</b>		

Acknowledgement of current & local events	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/1/16: Today is World AIDS Day. #StandWithPP in affirming that health care should not be political, and that includes the fight against HIV/AIDS! #WAD16</i>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 12/24/16: Happy Holidays from the Planned Parenthood family! Whatever you celebrate, we're wishing you and your loved ones the best.</i>
Giving recognition & thanks	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/24/16: We're giving thanks to the expert, caring doctors, nurses, educators, and staff at Planned Parenthood health centers throughout the country. We appreciate you. We love you.</i>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 11/9/16: Thank you Hillary Clinton. In your historic run, you brought our health and rights front and center. It is because of you and the women whose shoulders you stand on that we will, one day, shatter that highest glass ceiling once and for all.</i>
Response solicitation	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/26/16: What advice would you give to someone going to the gynecologist for the first time?</i> <i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/28/16: As we approach our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, stand with us and change your profile pic: <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/pptwibbon100">http://p.ppfa.org/pptwibbon100</a></i>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 11/16/16: Planned Parenthood's activists, donors, and supporters are 9 million strong. Do you volunteer for Planned Parenthood? Tell us why! #WeArePP</i>
Dialogue & storytelling *	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/16/16: Adeline was conflicted. She turned to Planned Parenthood for pregnancy counseling: <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2hmSBLk">http://p.ppfa.org/2hmSBLk</a> #WeArePP #StandWithPP</i>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 11/12/16: For 100 years, Planned Parenthood has provided compassionate, expert health care. A planned Parenthood doctor caught Carol's cervical cancer in 1970. This is her story of care. #WeArePP</i>
<b>Action</b>		
Promoting an event	<i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/1/16: Open enrollment is here! You can sign up for health insurance or renew your plan from November 1, 2016 through January</i>	<i>Planned Parenthood Action 11/7/16: VOTE November 8! Text "FIND" to 69866 to find your polling location.</i>



	31, 2017. Learn more and get covered: <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2eRaZem">http://p.ppfa.org/2eRaZem</a>	
Donation appeal	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/29/16:</i> Happy #GivingTuesday! Today's the day to stand with Planned Parenthood staff and patients across the country. Our health centers provide critical health care to millions of people each year- but we need your help to do it. Make a special gift today: <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2gtpqUj">http://p.ppfa.org/2gtpqUj</a></p>	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Action 12/31/16:</i> Ring in 2017 right: Donate to Planned Parenthood before midnight tonight, and your gift will automatically triple! <a href="http://ppaction.org/ppgive2016">http://ppaction.org/ppgive2016</a></p>
Call for volunteers & employees	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/15/16:</i> Since last week, Planned Parenthood has seen an unprecedented outpouring of support from both new and longtime supporters, friends, and grateful patients. One incredible way to support Planned Parenthood is by donating your time- meet some of our kick-ass volunteers in North Carolina. Interested in volunteering? Call your local PP health center or visit our website: <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2fUTlqY">http://p.ppfa.org/2fUTlqY</a></p>	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Action 11/21/16:</i> Are you ready to join the fight for reproductive rights? Then volunteer with Planned Parenthood Action Fund!</p>

Lobbying & advocacy	Not applicable.	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Action</i> 12/13/16: John Kasich has two dangerous abortion bans on his desk. Call him NOW.</p> <p><i>Planned Parenthood Action</i> 11/15/16: Nobody should be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or health care decisions- but that's what extreme lawmakers are pushing with the Russell Amendment. Sign on to reject discrimination: <a href="http://ppact.io/2eBLzTO">http://ppact.io/2eBLzTO</a></p> <p><i>Planned Parenthood Action</i> 11/4/16: We're not letting a sexist, racist bully get elected president. Canvass with @UltraViolet and us to stop him: <a href="http://ppact.io/2fLOBUW">http://ppact.io/2fLOBUW</a></p>
Vote for organization/ visit another site	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America</i> 11/7/16: Every vote counts and @Vote Latino + Planned Parenthood want to make sure you have a free #RideToThePolls to make your voice heard! Learn more here &gt;&gt; <a href="http://votolatino.org/rides">http://votolatino.org/rides</a></p>	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Action</i> 11/9/16: People are uniting across the country to stand against hate. Join <a href="http://moveon.org">moveon.org</a> tonight for a gathering of solidarity, resistance, and resolve near you.</p>
Learn how to help	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Federation of America</i> 11/11/16: 7 Things You Can Do to Help Planned Parenthood and the Communities We Serve --&gt; <a href="http://p.ppfa.org/2fk5ogH">http://p.ppfa.org/2fk5ogH</a></p>	<p><i>Planned Parenthood Action</i> 11/10/16: If you care about Planned Parenthood and want to DO something (anything!), try one of these 7 things today. And after today? Get ready to band together, gird our strength, and fight like hell to protect our rights. Because we are strong. Our movement is powerful. And we won't back down. Link: 7 Things You Can Do to Help Planned Parenthood and the Communities it Serves</p>

The majority of the above examples from the Planned Parenthood Action and Planned Parenthood Federation of America page in Table 1 are representative examples, where there are more posts within the data that were coded for these functions.

This chapter included background information, a literature review, and methodology for this study. As such, it explained the significant differences between 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) classifications of nonprofit organizations to understand the restrictions Planned Parenthood Federation of America faces as a 501(c)(3) organization, and the restrictions Planned Parenthood Action Fund faces as a 501(c)(4) organization in order to keep their tax-exempt status. This chapter also explained the current political context during the time of this study as Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in the 2016 Presidential election, leaving Planned Parenthood in a vulnerable situation with uncertainty facing the future of funding for the organization. This chapter reviewed literature used to guide the project and identify the research questions, including literature on the general purpose and functions of nonprofit advocacy organization's and how these organizations' can be used to serve and advocate for public interests. This chapter also reviewed literature about how social media has allowed nonprofit organizations to engage with community stakeholder beyond what an organizational website allows. The literature in this chapter also examined what organizational legitimacy means and Planned Parenthood's recent legitimacy struggles in recent years. This chapter introduced the information-community-action scheme by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) which will be used as the analytic framework for this study. Finally, this chapter explained the constant-comparison qualitative method used for this project and introduced the coding categories used during the analysis and the post functions analyzed.

Chapter two will describe the research findings from the comparative analysis of the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages by first describing how the information, community, and action communicative functions were used. Chapter two will also provide insights about the intertwined practices of engagement on the two Facebook pages, and describe overall differences in voice and target audience between Planned Parenthood Action and Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Facebook pages. Chapter three will provide a discussion that describes how the analysis contributes to our understanding of nonprofit organizations' social media use and discusses limitations and directions for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Analysis

In line with my three research questions, chapter two of this project is an analysis Planned Parenthood Federation of America's National Facebook page and Planned Parenthood Action's National Facebook page to interpret messages they distribute to community stakeholders. I comparatively examined the communicative strategies that were being used on the two Facebook pages in their messaging. I comparatively analyzed both Facebook pages for the *information*, *community*, and *action* functions. This chapter explains each of the communicative functions and how the two respective organizations used each of the functions. Chapter two also analyzes the intertwined practices of engagement by the two Facebook pages and provides insights about the overlapping use of communicative functions. Finally, this chapter comparatively analyzes the two Facebook pages by considering possible difference in target audiences between the two pages, differences in tone, and differing levels of engagement on the two Facebook pages.

#### *Communicative Functions*

##### *Information*

Lovejoy and Saxton described the Information function as one broad category, which included any posts that simply spread relevant information about the organization and their activities to community members. Throughout my analysis, I identified three additional categories that were appropriate for the information function. The additional categories were *organizational purpose*, *education*, and *political climate*, which I added during my inductive analysis to expand on the initial broad function of information by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) to specifically classify different types of informational messages being distributed. The

*organizational purpose* category included posts that provided information about Planned Parenthood by explaining what the organization does and the core values and principles held by the organization. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 23% of the time during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 18% of the time period of this study:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/30/16:* A message to our patients: “While politics and talk of defunding may be happening out there, health care happens in here.”

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/30/16:* Planned Parenthood was then, and is now, a beacon of hope, and a safe place for women. –Dr. Luz Towns-Miranda

The *education* category added by Klever classified posts that were used to educate community members on sexual health, laws regarding reproductive health care, and other information being shared for the purpose of educating the public. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 60% during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 24% during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/27/16:* Vaginal discharge is totally normal. Worried about yours? This is what healthy discharge looks like:

<http://p.ppfa.org/29ZJtWa>

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/4/16:* Voting is your right and duty. Copy this election protection information for yourself and share with friends! If you have a problem at the polls: call 1-866-our-vote or report it online: 866ourvote.org #RightsAtRisk

The final category in the information function is the *political climate*. I added this category to cover posts published with information regarding the current events occurring politically that

affect women and access to reproductive health care. This category is different from the *acknowledgement of current and local events* category of the community function, because it focuses on information about specific political occurrences, while the *acknowledgment of current and local events* category was used to promote events like Transgender Awareness Week or Holiday messages, rather than providing specific information about political news. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 30% during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 64% during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/12/16:* The progress that the Affordable Care Act has made for women's health couldn't be clearer, and we shouldn't go backward on any of these improvements.

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/9/16:* Let's get these words out of the way: Devastated. Angry. Shocked. Disgusted. Outraged. But mark these words: Planned Parenthood's doors stay open. We are resilient. We've survived years of relentless attacks. We will continue to fight for our health and rights. We won't allow the acceptance of institutionalized racism, sexism, and discrimination to become our new normal.

These three categories all had the main purpose of providing information to community members, for differing purposes. The page managers engaged in a variety of information sharing, including posts that shared information about the organizations current happenings and their purpose. These posts had a strong emphasis on the organization as a health care provider. This approach is significant because opponents often label Planned Parenthood as an abortion provider. Information focused the health care side of the organization helps to counter that perception and promote their mission to multiple groups. The education category of information included a broad range of educational topics including general information about women's

health, which helps Planned Parenthood connect with audiences, promote their health care goals, and counter perceptions of the organization as an abortion provider.

The political climate category consisted of a few posts regarding Planned Parenthoods' existence, using phrases like "these doors stay open," but mainly these posts were used more generally to provide information about current political happenings that could affect women's rights and access to reproductive care. Posts regarding the organizations existence in the current political climate included posts like this one from the Planned Parenthood Action page:

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/22/2016:* The American people overwhelmingly support Planned Parenthood and strongly oppose these attacks. We will fight like hell to stop backward politicians from shutting down Planned Parenthood- with words, with actions, with everything we have. We will not back down. Not ever. #IStandwithPP

Posts that provided general information about the political climate included posts like the following example, *Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/16/16*: "The progress that the Affordable Care Act has made for women's health couldn't be clearer, and we shouldn't go backward on any of these improvements". The Planned Parenthood Action page published more political climate posts regarding Planned Parenthoods' existence compared to the Planned Parenthood Federal of America page, while the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page published more posts consisting of educational information compared to the Planned Parenthood Action page. The *political climate* information category was used in 64% of posts by Planned Parenthood Action during the time period studied, the *education* category was used 24% of posts, and the *organizational purpose* category was used 18% of the time. In comparison, Planned Parenthood Federation of America's posts during this time period shared *educational* information 60% of the time, *political climate* information 30% of the time, and *organizational*



*purpose* information 22% of the time. This shows that Planned Parenthood Action’s Facebook posts relied most heavily on sharing information on the political climate, while Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s Facebook posts relied most heavily on sharing educational information.

### *Community*

The community function consisted of four categories, including posts that gave *acknowledgement of current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, response solicitation, dialogue and storytelling*. I drew from Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) for the *acknowledgement of current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, and response solicitation* categories. The *dialogue and storytelling* category emerged inductively throughout the analysis of the data.

The *acknowledgement of current and local events* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) covered any tweets that mentioned important events like holiday greeting or supporting community events or local happenings in order to create an organizational image as a “good neighbor.” This category differs from the *promoting an event* category under action because these posts do not mention a specific date and time of an event. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 15 times (22%) of the posts analyzed during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 39 times (16%) of the posts analyzed during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/24/16: Happy Holidays from all of us at Planned Parenthood.*

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/24/16: Happy Holidays from the Planned Parenthood family! Whatever you celebrate, we’re wishing you and your loved ones the best.*

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/20/16:* Planned Parenthood is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year of care, action, and education. Hear Cecile Richards' special message about the work ahead.

The second community category is *giving recognition and thanks* by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), comprised of posts that acknowledged and thanked public figures, members, and supporters of Planned Parenthood, as well as other community organizations that supported Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category six times (9%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 28 times (12%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/3/16:* The founders of the Black Lives Matter movement are being honored this year among 'Glamour Women of the Year.' Read the story of how they built a movement.

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/11/16:* Thank you CREDO Mobile & the CREDO community for having Planned Parenthood's back.

*Response solicitation* is the third community category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012); this includes posts that specifically seek a response from community members to create open conversation on a topic. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category nine times (13%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 24 times (10%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 1/1/17:* We're not backing down in 2017. Our doors will stay open and we'll keep fighting for your access to health care. What about you? What will you fight for in 2017?

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/6/16:* Show us your "I voted" selfies! Tag us or use #PinkOutTheVote

The response solicitation posts published by both organization pages sought out reactions from community members, by asking them to answer specific questions, tell stories about women's reproductive health care experiences, post pictures of community member engagement using hashtags, and change profile pictures to Planned Parenthood related images.

The final category that I added to the community function is *dialogue and storytelling*. This category includes posts that promotes collective storytelling from community members and fosters open dialogue about the experiences that community members have had with Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 12 times (18%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 32 times (13%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/13/16:* "You are absolutely not alone, and there are millions of women behind you who support your right to choose yourself."

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/23/16:* MaryAnne is a 59-year-old battling terminal breast cancer. Her story shows why we need to fight to protect the ACA.

Each of these four categories in the community function serve the purpose of connecting community stakeholders and engaging in dialogue between the organization and the community members, and from one community member to another. The acknowledgement of current and local events category mainly consisted of holiday messages national celebration days. The giving recognition and thanks category consisted of posts that recognized community members and organizations that support Planned Parenthood's mission and cause. The response solicitation category used specific response instructions or open ended questions to promote community feedback and often times used a hashtag to promote conversation. The dialogue and storytelling category used stories from community members and offered support to community members on

a range of current political or health related issues. The dialogue and storytelling posts tend to share experiences that women have had regarding topics that are politically significant at the time of posting. In the time period following the election, a lot of women and minorities voiced feelings of being alone or ignored; in reaction Planned Parenthood used storytelling and dialogue during this time to remind the community members they are not alone in this fight and that the organization is there to stand by them and support them. During this time period, conversation heavily centered around access to health care and the questionable future for the Affordable Care Act considering the incoming Trump Administrations promise to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Therefore, during this time period, the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages relied heavily on storytelling to create real life examples of patient's reliance on Planned Parenthood to stress the importance of legislation that supports access to health care and Planned Parenthood clinics through the Affordable Care Act. Planned Parenthood Action page used the *acknowledgement of current and local events* category more often than any other community function category, the category was used 39 times (16%) during the time period analyzed. Planned Parenthood Federation of America also used the *acknowledgement of current and local events* category more often than any other community function category, using the category in 15 of the posts (22%) during the time period analyzed.

### *Action*

Action was the final primary function, which included six categories from Lovejoy and Saxton (2012): *promoting an event, donation appeal, call for volunteers and employees, lobbying and advocacy, vote for organization/visit another site, and learn how to help*. There were no additional categories added to the Action function throughout the inductive analysis of the data. The *promoting an event* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) contained posts that

went beyond providing information about an event by also including a date, time, or price of the event. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category nine times (13%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 18 times (8%) analyzed during the same time period. These posts often promoted events that focused on health care and insurance enrollment:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/20/17: Happening NOW: Debra Ness, National Partnership president, is live to take your health insurance questions.*

*#GetCovered*

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/1/16: Starting now through January 31, you can sign up for affordable health insurance. Planned Parenthood can help you understand how it works.*

The *donation appeal* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) consisted of messages that directly asked for donations or for support of other companies that were donating to the organization and cause. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category six times (9%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 18 times (8%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/31/16: Care- no matter what. That's always been the Planned Parenthood promise. Today, that promise has never mattered more. Donate now: <http://p.ppfa.org/2ir8Bgu>*

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/20/16: Donate to Planned Parenthood and you could win travel and tickets to see Hamilton in three cities and get backstage!*

The *call for volunteers and employees'* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) contained messages that listed volunteer and employment opportunities for community members to get involved with the organization. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category two times (3%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category five times (2%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/15/16:* Since last week, Planned Parenthood has seen an unprecedented outpouring of support from both new and longtime supporters, friends, and grateful patients. One incredible way to support Planned Parenthood is by donating your time- meet some of our kick-ass volunteers in North Carolina. Interested in volunteering? Call your local PP health center or visit our website: <http://p.ppfa.org/2fUTiqY>

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/26/16:* We're not going anywhere- and we need your help to fight back: <http://ppact.io/2eZTXMs> 4 things you can do to support Planned Parenthood right now: donate to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, volunteer and join the fight, make your next health care appointment at a Planned Parenthood health center near you, and use #WeWontGoBack to post your defiance on social media.

The *lobbying and advocacy* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) included messages that directly asked community members to perform a lobbying or advocacy activity. Planned Parenthood Federation of America did not post any messages involving lobbying and advocacy, but Planned Parenthood Action posted 17 messages (7%) that involved lobbying and advocacy activity:

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/16/16:* We need to tell Trump, Pence, and extreme lawmakers that we won't go back. ADD YOUR NAME: <http://secure.ppaction.org>

The *join another site or vote for organization* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) consisted of messages that asked community members to join a separate social media site or to vote for the organization on another site. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category 24 times (36%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 60 times (25%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 12/11/16:* @Everyday Feminism talks about how alcohol plays into consent.

*Planned Parenthood Action 11/19/16:* A few clicks and you can support Planned Parenthood's work: Vote for CREDO give money to Planned Parenthood.

The final category in the action function was the *learn how to help* category by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) included two steps: to learn how to help, and to actually help. Planned Parenthood Federation of America use this category two times (3%) during the time period examined, while Planned Parenthood Action used the category 14 times (6%) during the same time period:

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America 11/11/16:* 7 Things You Can Do to Help Planned Parenthood and the Communities We Serve --> <http://p.ppfa.org/2fk5ogH>

*Planned Parenthood Action 12/21/16:* Here's how extremists are trying to block low-income people's access to health care- and how you can fight back:

<http://ppact.io/2igyCvm>

The promoting an event category consisted of posts that promoted both organizational events, political gatherings, or health care events, like signing up for insurance plans by a certain deadline. The most common type of event that was promoted by both sites were health insurance events intended to get community members to sign up for affordable insurance plans by the appropriate deadline, which was significant during this time period as it neared the deadline to enroll in health insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act. The donation appeal category consisted of posts that asked community members for donations to Planned Parenthood using a variety of techniques. Posts would often be tied to current events or holidays to convince community members to donate to the cause during specific current events. The call for volunteers and employee's category used metaphor language like "join the battle" or "help in the fight" to gain support through volunteers and employees. Both Facebook pages also tend to use a bandwagon approach to call for volunteers by highlighting that people are already reaching out to volunteer and help the organization, and then asks for participation from community members.

The *lobbying and advocacy* posts on the Planned Parenthood Action page used the platform to point out laws, policies, and politicians that might threaten the organization and asked community members to call their representatives or sign petitions. The *vote for another organization or visit another site* category included posts that were often in collaboration with other organizations. These often overlapped with the *giving recognition and thanks* community function, as they thank and recognize an organization or person, they also try to send community stakeholders to their separate websites. Finally, the posts that were used to teach people how to help suggested that community stakeholders should donate to Planned Parenthood, speak out against hate, to volunteer for Planned Parenthood, to make their next appointment for health care at a Planned Parenthood clinic, to post their defiance to social media using the hashtag



“#WeWontGoBack, to share Cecile Richard’s message of strength, and to sign up for emails and text from the organization. Each of these categories fall under the action function, which attempts to get community stakeholders to actually do something for the organization by engaging in a certain act like donating to the organization, volunteering their time, or directly asking community members to contact their representatives to stand up for reproductive rights. Planned Parenthood Action used the *vote for organization or visit another site* category more often than any other action category during the time period examined, the category was used 60 times (25%) in posts on Planned Parenthood Action’s Facebook page. Planned Parenthood Federation of America also used the *vote for organization or visit another site* category more often than any other action category during the time period examined, the category was used 24 times (35%) in posts on Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s Facebook page.

### *Intertwined Practices of Engagement*

Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) called for future research to study whether the information-community-action message classification scheme could represent a hierarchy of engagement. This would mean that the baseline of communication is the informational messages organizations’ send to their community stakeholders. Informational messages are used to attract community members to the page. From there, community messages are used to engage and connect stakeholders. Finally, action messages ultimately serve to mobilize the community that has been created through the informational and community messages (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). I found that every post on both the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action page uses a variety of communicative functions. While each post often engaged with more than one communicative function, I do not believe that the communicative functions were used in a hierarchical pattern, where each post’s end goal is to

reach the action function. Although it seems that the use of the information function is a prerequisite for both the community and action functions, it is not accurate to say that the community function is also a prerequisite to reach the action function. I found that the information function must be used as the base of all community and action posts, but the community function is not required for the action function to be utilized. Rather, the concepts are often intertwined in practice, as the organizations attempt to achieve a variety of communicative functions in their Facebook posts. This means that there was not a linear hierarchical pattern found in the data, rather intertwined uses of the communicative functions as needed for a specific messaging goal of a Facebook post. Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted the following on November 18, 2016:

If you're trans and you need support, Planned Parenthood is here for you. We strive to provide health care that's inclusive and respectful of all genders. Our goal is to make every person who comes through our doors feel welcome, comfortable, and cared for while providing expert care- no matter what. Find a health center:

<http://p.ppfa.org/2gmtium>

This post provides information about Planned Parenthood's organizational purpose, touches on community functions by recognizing current and local events during transgender awareness week, and calls for action to visit another site to find a Planned Parenthood health care center.

This example shows the organization including multiple communicative functions to ultimately inform community members and call them to action based on the information provided. Another example of the organization using a combination of communicative functions can be found in the following post from Planned Parenthood Action on December 8, 2016:

These tweets prove why access to affordable birth control is SO important:

<http://ppact.io/2hk7Nd9>. Tell us your story in the comments. Thanks @Refinery29 for compiling the tweets, and Gabriella Sanchez (<http://gabriella-sanchez.com/>) for the art.

This post shows the Planned Parenthood Action page using information functions to educate about the importance of birth control. They use community functions with response solicitation tactics to engage in conversation with community members and recognizing Gabriella Sanchez and Refinery29 for supporting the cause. Finally, they are also attempt to call community members to action by asking them to visit another site, including their own page, Refinery29's Facebook page, and Gabriella Sanchez's website.

It does not seem that the communicative functions were being utilized in the sense of a linear hierarchy. The end goal of each post was not to climb all the way up the ladder of communicative functions to reach the action function. Rather, it appears the two Planned Parenthood organizations' strategically intertwined multiple communicative functions in a variety of ways in each post to achieve the most effective message for the purpose of each individual post. I do not see these functions being used in a linear hieratical pattern, rather as an attempt to use one post for multiple messaging purposes. I argue that this intertwined practice of engagement is different than a hierarchy approach, because Planned Parenthood is not using the functions as a ladder with a goal being to get to the action function in every post. The goal of every post by the Planned Parenthood page was not necessarily to call the community members to action, rather some posts goal was to simply educate and provide information, and these posts did not aim to reach the action function, therefore it is not necessarily a hierarchy where they are attempting to climb the ladder of functions to call the community members to action in each post. Some posts simply stop at information sharing, while other posts use community functions

on top of sharing information. Every post published contains information of some sort, making information the base communicative function. Perhaps this finding is different than Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) hierarchical finding because of the format of Facebook compared to Twitter as a social media platform. Facebook has a longer format, which allows an organization to accomplish more with each post. Therefore, with each post the organization has the ability to use a variety of communicative functions, without necessarily the goal being to drive community stakeholders to action.

On both of the Facebook pages, there were overlaps found in the communicative functions used. One significant overlap included posts under the *acknowledgment of current and local events* category (community function) strongly aligned with the *donation appeal* category (action function). I found that Planned Parenthood used current events, like holidays (i.e. new years, Christmas, Thanksgiving, or Giving Tuesday) as a time to ask community members to donate money to the organization. There was also a strong overlap between the *giving recognition and thanks* category (community function) and the *vote for the organization or visit another site* category (action function). When the pages posted messages acknowledging organizations or people for their help in the fight for women's reproductive health care rights, they would often link to the page of the person or organization whom they are recognizing to attract community stakeholders to allies' pages. For example, Planned Parenthood Action posted the following message on November 17, 2016, "Sharing this important resource. Thanks, ACLU Nationwide! <http://ACLU.org/knowyourrights>". This post engages in both the community function of *giving recognition and thanks*, as well as the action function of *vote for the organization or visit another site* by thanking the ACLU Nationwide for educating community

members about their rights, and also links to the ACLU Nationwide website to their article about knowing your rights.

The *political climate* category (information function) was also strongly tied to the *donation appeal* category (action function). During this time period, Planned Parenthood relied on sharing information about the current political happenings and they asked community members for monetary donations in response to political events. The organization shared political information that explained the questionable future of Planned Parenthood funding based on the contentious political climate, and used the fear of their questionable future to ask supporters to donate to help secure the future of the organization. For example, on November 17, 2016 Planned Parenthood Action posted, “Your donation will help us fight back against extreme attacks on our health and rights. Donate to Planned Parenthood. Reproductive health and rights are under unprecedented attack right now. Everything from affordable birth control to access to safe, legal abortion is at risk”. Another example includes a post published by Planned Parenthood Action on November 10, 2016:

Donald Trump and Mike Pence made clear that they’d block patients’ access to care at Planned Parenthood. Chip in to fight back: Donate to Planned Parenthood Action Fund. Women’s health and rights are under unprecedented attack right now. Everything from affordable birth control to access to safe, legal abortion is at risk under a Trump/Pence presidency.

These examples show Planned Parenthood explaining the political climate and how it threatens reproductive health, and uses that fear appeal to ask for donations to help fight back against political attacks. There were significant overlaps between information on the *political climate*

and the *donation appeal* categories throughout the data, showing a strategy to use the uncertainty that the political climate causes to get community members to donate to Planned Parenthood.

Finally, the *political climate* category (information function) often overlapped with the Planned Parenthood Action page's posts about *lobbying and advocacy* (action function). In order to make a lobbying or advocacy post, the Planned Parenthood Action page also had to use the political climate category of the information function to provide a basic understanding of the political issue they are addressing. For example, on December 13, 2016 Planned Parenthood Action posted, "John Kasich has two dangerous abortion bans on his desk. Call him NOW. 1-877-240-0271". This post provided political information about the Ohio Governors dangerous abortion plans, and engaged in lobbying by directly asking community members to call the Governor and tell him to veto all abortion bans. Planned Parenthood Action posted another lobbying message on December 5, 2016, "Rep. Tom Price has a long record of supporting policies that reduce access to health care and increase disparities. Oppose his nomination: <http://ppact.io/2fNPnPR>. Speak out against Trump's pick for our nation's top health care officer". This post provided information about the political background of the nominee and engaged in lobbying by asking community members to oppose his nomination by clicking the link and filling out the information to send a message to senators to vote against the nominee. Overall, there was a strong intertwined practice of engagement and overlapping functions on each of the respective Facebook pages. The significant overlaps in function shows a strategic attempt for the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages to engage with multiple communicative functions to reach a specific messaging goal for each post. These overlaps in communicative functions shows how the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages are engaging in an

intertwined messaging practices to interact with community stakeholders in a variety of different ways for a specific purpose in each post.

### *Comparative Analysis*

We now have an understanding of the information, community, and action communicative functions and how the two respective organizations have used each of the functions during the highly political time period, as well as an understanding of the intertwined practices of engagement by the two Facebook pages, and of the significant overlapping use of communicative functions. This section of the analysis analyzes the differences between the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages by examining differences in target audiences between the two pages, differences in tone and voice in the messages published on the pages, and differences in engagement between the two Facebook pages.

#### *Differences in Target Audience and Tone*

As a 501(c)(4) organization, the Planned Parenthood Action Fund's main objectives were highly concerned with policy change that aligns with their organizational mission. Their Facebook posts involved a significant amount of lobbying and advocacy. The messages published on the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page were often politically related, in a strategic attempt to keep community stakeholders informed about the current political climate and its significance to women's reproductive health rights. In comparison, the 501(c)(3) organization, Planned Parenthood Federation of America's main objectives were highly concerned with the health care side of the organization. Their Facebook posts involved a significant amount of information regarding reproductive health care and sex education in attempt to focus on the health of the community members. I found that Planned Parenthood made

a strategic decision to keep the two organizations' Facebook pages run completely independent of one another, therefore it is important to look at the organization descriptions on each Facebook page to gauge if there is any possible difference in target audiences.

The Planned Parenthood Action pages' description states they are "A nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization, the Action Fund engages in educational and electoral activity, including legislative advocacy, voter education, and grassroots organizing. With your support, we work to elect pro-choice candidates at every level and pass laws and policies that support women's health" (Planned Parenthood Action, 2016). The Planned Parenthood Federation of America page description states they are "A trusted health care provider, an informed educator, a passionate advocate, and a global partner helping similar organizations around the world, Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of women, men, and young people worldwide. For nearly 100 years, Planned Parenthood has promoted a commonsense approach to women's health and well-being, based on respect for each individual's right to make informed, independent decisions about health, sex, and family planning" (Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 2016). The Planned Parenthood Federation of America's "about" section of their Facebook page linked the Planned Parenthood Action Fund's Facebook page as "other Facebook pages you might be interested in", while the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page does not link back to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page.

It seems that the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page serves the purpose of posting information about sex education, the organization as a health care provider, and reproductive health information to community stakeholders. For this page, the community stakeholder may be different than that of the Planned Parenthood Action page. On the Planned



Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page, the community stakeholder, or the intended audience appears to be clients or potential clients in need of reproductive health care or reproductive health care information. The intended audience, or community stakeholder of the Planned Parenthood Action page on the other hand appears to be community members who have the funds and ability to donate to the organization, and advocates who want to join the cause and fight for reproductive rights. If the intended audience for the two Facebook pages are slightly different between the two, this would account for the two sites being run completely separate with no overlapping posts.

Another notable difference between the two Facebook pages is the tone used on the respective pages. The Planned Parenthood Action page seems to take a more serious and at times even used a frustrated and inflammatory tone in their posts, while the Planned Parenthood Federation of America seems to take a more positive, cheery, and informative tone. The Planned Parenthood Action addresses a variety of serious political issues in their messages on Facebook, therefore the tone used is much more stern and severe at times when addressing highly significant political topics. When laws and regulations are proposed or passed by politicians that negatively impact women or minority groups, the Planned Parenthood Action page reacts with a frustrated and urgent tone in their Facebook messages to reinforce their disapproval of the specific event or news and to share in the emotional impact of a specific event. It appears that the Planned Parenthood Action page uses this frustrated tone at times to encourage outrage in community stakeholders, because sparking outrage can keep the community stakeholders engaged and active in the movement. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America tends to stick to sending messages about health care, therefore the tone used on their Facebook page takes a more informational and educational tone. On December 16, 2016 the two pages posted

messages with very different tones to educate community stakeholders on the political climate. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted, “Three cheers for the Obama Administration! It just finalized a new rule that protects health care for the 4 million people who rely on Title X- ensuring people with low incomes or without health insurance can access birth control, cancer screenings, and other care at any qualified provider, including Planned Parenthood health centers. But the fight isn’t over. The next administration could attach these new protections: <http://p.ppfa.org/2gSGdUt> #StandWithPP”, while the Planned Parenthood Action page posted, “Infuriating: Oklahoma passed a law requiring public facilities to give out information to create “an abortion-free society.” So how are they doing it? Providing sex education and family planning? Of course not! They’re forcing bathrooms in restaurants, hospitals, school and more to post signs that shame and demean pregnant women considering abortion.” One post takes a happy tone, praising the Obama administration for protecting patients who rely on Title X, while the other post by Planned Parenthood Action page takes a serious and frustrated tone about the political happenings in Oklahoma.

This difference in tone was apparent frequently throughout the data analyzed where Planned Parenthood Federation of America took a more positive tone, and Planned Parenthood Action took a more serious and angered tone. On November 10, 2016 Planned Parenthood Action posted, “If you care about Planned Parenthood and want to DO something (anything!), try one of these 7 things today. And after today? Get ready to band together, gird our strength, and fight like hell to protect our rights. Because we are strong. Our movement is powerful. And we won’t back down”. On November 11, 2016 Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted the same link to the 7 ways to help Planned Parenthood article saying, “7 Things You Can Do to Help Planned Parenthood and the Communities We Serve --> <http://p.ppfa.org/2fk5ogH>”. Again,

a difference in tone is noted between the two Facebook pages as they post about the same topic. Here, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page uses a direct, informative tone approach to let people know what they can do to help the organization and community. In contrast, the Planned Parenthood Action page tone was a bit different, with a more passionate tone, tying in political comments about the movement and power before letting people know what they can do to help.

### *Differences in Engagement*

Planned Parenthood Federation of America used the advocacy function in their posts less frequently than the Planned Parenthood Action page. Out of the 67 posts published on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page between November 1, 2016 and January 1, 2017, the information function was coded 67 times, the community function was coded 42 times, and the action function was coded 43 times. This shows that all of the posts actually aimed to provide informational content to the community, and some posts used community and action functions in combination with the information functions to achieve different messaging goals, but not all posts were published with the goal of getting community members to take action. The posts on the Planned Parenthood Action page were coded 238 times for information functions, 123 times for community functions, and 132 times for action functions out of the total 238 posts published during this time period. This shows that the Planned Parenthood Action page does not just employ political posts, but they also include an emphasis on community building in their messaging, while using the information function in every post published.

Interestingly, Planned Parenthood Federation of America did not have a single action post that engaged in lobbying and advocacy during this time period. Since Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a 501(c)(3) organization, the organization cannot endorse a political

candidate or donate to a campaign which may limit its ability to post about lobbying and advocacy (International Revenue Service, 2017). Although Planned Parenthood Federation of America falls under a 501(c)(3) classification, the organization is still allowed to engage in some level of lobbying and advocacy yet none appeared during the time period examined. As a 501(c)(3) organization, Planned Parenthood Federation of America may also involve themselves in issues of public policy in an educational manner without risk of losing their tax-exempt status (International Revenue Service, 2017). Although Planned Parenthood Federation of America was allowed a certain level of lobbying and public policy involvement, the organization completely avoided posting messages in this category altogether and left these posts to the 501(c)(4) organization, Planned Parenthood Action. Because Planned Parenthood Federation of America completely avoids lobbying posts even though they are technically allowed to engage in a certain level of lobbying, it appears to be a strategic decision for the organization to leave the lobbying posts to the Planned Parenthood Action Page and strategically separate the messaging use in the two organization Facebook pages.

During the same time period, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page posted significantly less posts than the Planned Parenthood Action page, showing a great difference in activity levels between the two pages. This difference in activity on the two Facebook pages shows a strong emphasis on the political advocacy and lobbying messaging during this time period, as the organizations posted multiple times a day on the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page and only about once a day on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page.

It is expected that Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action fund function different in some ways, considering their difference in nonprofit

classification- as Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a 501(c)(3) organization and Planned Parenthood Action is a 501(c)(4) organization. Although some differences were expected between the two pages, there were a number of noteworthy differences that emerged throughout this chapter. Chapter two provided an overall understanding of how the two organizations were using the information, community, and action functions of social media during the political time period. Chapter two also evaluated the intertwined practices of engagement by the two Facebook pages and explained the two organizations use of multiple communicative function in a single post to achieve messaging goals. This chapter noted significant overlaps in functions that emerged throughout the data, including overlaps between the community function of *acknowledging current and local events* and the action function of *donation appeal*, the community function of giving recognition and thanks, and the action function of *vote for the organization or visit another site*, the information function on the *political climate* and the action function of *donation appeal*, and finally the information function on the *political climate* and the action function of *lobbying and advocacy*. Finally, this chapter provided insights about the health and patient related intended audience and simplistic education-focused tone of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page, and the advocate and supporter intended audience and serious and controlled tone of the Planned Parenthood Action page.

## Chapter 3

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study engaged in an interpretive analysis to compare the messaging used on two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages: The Planned Parenthood Federation of America national page and the Planned Parenthood Action national page. Comparatively, the two pages seem to be used in very different ways. While there is a clear difference between the two organizations' nonprofit status, there are some interesting findings that came from an analysis of the two Facebook pages. In this chapter, I discuss the communicative functions, target audience and tone, levels of engagement, legitimacy challenges, and then conclude with suggestions for future research.

I employed Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) research, which proposed an information-community-action scheme of social media use by nonprofit organizations as the theoretical framework for this study. The coding categories by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) were used for the first round of coding of the two Facebook pages. A second round of coding noted additional categories that emerged through the inductive analysis. The analysis explained the three communicative functions, *information*, *community*, and *action*, and used the three functions and the 13 categories compare the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page messages. Four of the 13 categories were inductively added throughout this analysis, including three categories under the information function (organizational purpose, education, and political climate) and one category under the community function (dialogue and storytelling).

This study found that both of the Facebook pages were engaging in an intertwined practice of engagement, using multiple functions in each Facebook post to achieve more than

one messaging goal. There were some interesting overlaps found in the communicative functions being used on the Facebook pages. First, there was an overlap between posts that acknowledged current and local events and posts that were used for donation appeal. Second, there was an overlap of posts that were used to provide information on the political climate and for donation appeal. Finally, there was an overlap with posts that provided information on the political climate and posts that were used for lobbying and advocacy. While there was a strong mix of intertwined use of practice throughout the messages on both Facebook pages, these three overlapping use of functions were notable throughout the data. The intertwined practice of engagement of communicative functions provided an overall understanding of how Planned Parenthood uses the action function, because they tend to play on relevant political information or community events as a platform to ask for donations or for community members to engage in lobbying. Planned Parenthood does not just flat out ask community members for donations or to lobby on behalf of the organization, rather they use a mix of communicative functions in the process of seeking action from community stakeholders.

Comparatively, this study found that the Planned Parenthood Action page was being used more frequently than the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page during the study time-frame. The Planned Parenthood Action page also engaged in lobbying and advocacy posts, while the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page did not. Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a 501(c)(3) organization, and their messages seemed to be more health focused aimed towards clients or future clients. Planned Parenthood Action is a 501(c)(4) organization, and their messages seemed to be more politically rooted aimed towards advocates.

The messages posted on the two Facebook pages seemed to have different tones, the Planned Parenthood Action page used a more serious, and at times frustrated tone, while the

Planned Parenthood Federation of America page used a simpler and lighter tone throughout their posts. To understand the difference in tone between the two Facebook pages, we can compare two Facebook posts that were used to give recognition and thanks by each organization. Planned Parenthood Federation of America posted the following post on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, “We’re giving thanks to the expert, caring doctors, nurses, educators, and staff at Planned Parenthood health centers throughout the country. We appreciate you. We love you”. Planned Parenthood Action posted the following on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, “Thank you Hillary Clinton. In your historic run, you brought our health and rights front and center. It is because of you and the women whose shoulders you stand on that we will, one day, shatter that highest glass ceiling once and for all”. Again, here you can see Planned Parenthood Federation of America has a lighter tone, while Planned Parenthood Action has a more serious tone in its messaging. This seems to be due to the two Facebook pages having different messaging goals, with the effect of the Planned Parenthood Action page having more serious messaging aiming to create political change, while the Planned Parenthood Federation of America uses a plainer tone with the aim of focusing on reproductive health care.

While some differences were expected considering the difference in nonprofit classifications between Planned Parenthood Action and Planned Parenthood Federation of America, this study provided interesting and significant qualitative findings about the use of the two Facebook pages during the highly political time period. Using the information, community, and action functions to analyze the messages on the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages has provided in-depth insights about the social media practices that have been employed by Planned Parenthood during a highly significant time period for the organization.

#### *Communicative Functions*



My analysis found that both organization Facebook pages used information, community, and action communicative functions in their messaging in a variety of ways. This study shows that Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages used more than one communicative function in the majority of posts published in an intertwined practice of engagement. The information function was used to inform followers and members of the public about the organizations' purpose, the political climate, and to educate them about reproductive health, about their rights and laws regarding reproductive health care. The information function was the most used function on both the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action pages. The information function consisted of one-way messages from the organization to the public that were used as the core of each post published, so this function was found in nearly all of the posts published with the community and action functions. The sharing of information from an organization can actually lead to higher levels of perceived public trust and accountability from community stakeholders (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). Planned Parenthood used Facebook as a tool to arm stakeholders with information to help advocate for the organization, and they sought to correct false information about the organization as an attempt to boost public trust during a time period of great uncertainty.

The community function was used to build a sense of connectivity between community members and the organization by acknowledging current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, response solicitation, and through dialogue and storytelling. Their specific focus in this case was to create dialogue and appear as a good neighbor to other organizations and community members. The organization embodied the community function by inviting community stakeholders to interact and converse in a way that enables the creation of an online community between followers and the organization. The Planned Parenthood Federation of

America used the community function in approximately 63% of their messages, and the Planned Parenthood Action page used the community function in approximately 52% of their messages to enable and build an online community by using messaging strategies that promotes dialogue. Social media platforms like Facebook allow for more effective dialogic communication than the traditional organization website. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), social media platforms allow for more interactivity through two-way exchanges to promote network creation and public, open dialogue. Planned Parenthood used storytelling and dialogue in the community function during this highly political and fearful time to remind the community members they are not alone in this fight and that the organization is there to stand by them and support them to engage in community building. Planned Parenthood Action page used the *acknowledgement of current and local events* category more often than any other community function category, the category was used 39 times (16%) in posts published during the time period analyzed. Planned Parenthood Federation of America also used the *acknowledgement of current and local events* category more often than any other community function category, using the category in 15 posts (22%) published during the time period analyzed. Both of the Facebook pages relied on recognizing current events to build this online community.

Finally, the pages used the action function to get community stakeholders to progress beyond being passive audience members, to being active audience members by actually performing a specific action to help the organization. The action function was used to call for participation in events, appeal for donations, volunteers and employees etc. for event promotion, donation appeal, calls for volunteers and employees, calling the public to engage in lobbying and advocacy, voting for the organization or visiting another site, and learning how to help by scheduling preventative care visits at Planned Parenthood clinics, speak out against hate, by

signing up for emails and texts, etc. The action function included outcomes-oriented messages, where they are asking followers to take a specific action to help the organization achieve its objectives (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page employed the action function a significant amount more than the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Given that the specific purpose of the Planned Parenthood Action page is to reach audience members that are advocates or who are interested in participating in the reproductive rights movement, it makes sense for the Facebook page to rely heavily on the Action function compared to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook, page which mainly aims to provide reproductive health information to patients and future patients, and having two separate Facebook pages allows them that flexibility.

### *Levels of Engagement*

The levels of engagement between the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages seem to differ, where the Planned Parenthood Federation of America page seems primarily to use the public information model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), while the Planned Parenthood Action page more often uses the 2-way symmetrical model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The Planned Parenthood Federation Facebook page leans more toward the public information model of public relations, in the sense that the messaging on the page was often used to send one-way information to community members about reproductive health care. At times, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page steps beyond the hypodermic needle one-way model of communication by inviting responses and open dialogue. The Planned Parenthood Federation invites responses and open dialogue when they engaged in the response solicitation category of

the community function, nine posts (13%) published by Planned Parenthood Federation during this time period invited response solicitation from the audience.

The Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page most often engaged in the 2-way symmetrical model which is multidirectional and interactional between community members, the organization, and current events. The 2-way symmetrical model of public relations involves back and forth communication between the organization and community members, and the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page posted messages that invited community member engagement and response.

### *Audiences*

Based on this analysis of their different approaches to posting, I argue that the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages have different target audiences. Different target audiences imply different publics, which explains the different public relations models used and different strategies employed on the two Facebook pages. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page posts information about the organization as a health care provider and educates about sexual health. Therefore, it appears the intended audience for these posts are women interested in reproductive health care, as well as past, present, and future users of Planned Parenthood clinics. The Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page posts about the political side of reproductive health care. Given their calls for action, it appears that their intended audience includes advocates and community members who are able to donate time and money for the movement to defend and promote women's reproductive health and choice-making. This difference in intended audience paired with the difference in nonprofit classifications between the two organization explains the reasoning for managing the two Facebook pages completely separately from one another.

Although the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Facebook pages are run independently of one another, this analysis shows that each of the pages uses what the literature would view as generally good practices for social media for nonprofit organizations based on the audience that each page is targeting. Each of the respective pages is using the platform to interact with key stakeholders on topics of interest beyond what their organizational websites allow for them to do. They are using the Facebook pages as a platform to provide timely and relevant information about important issues to community stakeholders, while providing a space for relationship building with community members. Arguably, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America could improve their use of Facebook by using more two-way messaging to engage with audience feedback about health messages. Researchers have found differing levels of engagement from nonprofit organizations on social media. While some organizations use social media as a means for one-way messaging (Waters & Jamal, 2011), others found organizations use social media to build two-way real time threaded dialogue (Heath, 2010).

### *Combating Legitimacy Challenges*

Planned Parenthood faces a legitimacy challenge in the current political climate, as the organization is a reproductive health advocacy organization that frequently faces backlash from anti-abortion activists and conservative policy advocates. I found that the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages are used to share stories about the organization helping community members, build dialogue, and share information about the organizations happenings in order to seek out community stakeholders as allies that can speak with others to build a narrative that strengthens their legitimacy. Planned Parenthood does not ignore the fact that they constantly face a threat to their legitimacy, rather the organization uses social media as a tool to promote

conversation about the positive aspects of the organization and how they have helped community members as a health care organization to confront their legitimacy issues head on. These stories present a counter-narrative to the legitimacy threats the organization faces.

The posts published on both Facebook pages tend to focus on women's health care, as a way to counter the narrative that threatens the organizations' legitimacy that Planned Parenthood's main purpose is to serve as an abortion provider. Specifically, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Facebook page did not engage in a single post that was classified as lobbying and advocacy, rather their posts focused on sharing information about relevant health related topics and opening a conversation about women's health care.

The Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page used messaging strategies that described the anti-abortion or conservative opposition as malicious. The organization used "they" language to describe the opposition's views as attacks against women, and described pro-life views as the blocking of safe access to abortion care. The use of "they" language in messaging on the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Facebook page the organizations' attempts to combat their legitimacy concerns surrounding their involvement in abortion care by deflecting the attention away from them and providing the public with a new enemy, which in this case is the organizations' political opposition. The Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page attempted to paint the opposition negatively by building the narrative that they do not care about the dangers women will have to face if they are forced to seek out illegal abortions because of legislation that blocks their access to care. This narrative was used to try and rebuild the organizations legitimacy despite Planned Parenthood providing abortion-care, because their ability to provide these legal services keeps women safe from the possible outcomes of being forced to engage in dangerous unregulated abortion-care. For example, Planned Parenthood Action posted the following on

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, “Let’s get these words out of the way: Devastated. Angry. Shocked. Disgusted. Outraged. But mark these words: Planned Parenthood’s doors stay open. We are resilient. We’ve survived years of relentless attacks. We will continue to fight for our health and rights. We won’t allow the acceptance of institutionalized racism, sexism, and discrimination to become our new normal”. This seems to be an attempt for Planned Parenthood to use their Planned Parenthood Action Facebook page to combat legitimacy concerns surrounding their involvement in abortion care by deflecting the attention away from them and providing the public with a new enemy- the opposition. They paint the opposition negatively by building the narrative that critics do not care about the dangers women will face if they are forced to seek out illegal abortions because of legislation that blocks access to care. This narrative is used to rebuild the organizations legitimacy by emphasizing their role as a total women’s health care provider, and by arguing that keeping abortion legal means keeping it safe, they provide abortion care, because their ability to provide legal services keeps women safe from the possible outcomes of being forced to engage in dangerous unregulated abortion-care. Planned Parenthood has relied on Facebook as a tool to combat their legitimacy concerns, by analyzing the two organizational Facebook pages has provided significant theoretical and pragmatic implications.

### *Theoretical and Pragmatic Implications*

There are many theoretical and pragmatic implications of this study. This section explains these implications and how this research is significant to the communication field in a variety of ways. This study is practically significant, as it shows how social media can be used in diverse ways for organization social media accounts that have differing purposes. This study shows that Planned Parenthood uses two different Facebook pages to meet strategic goals. Based on Lovejoy and Saxton’s (2012) research, nonprofit organizations use social media to its full

potential when messages are used to promote an interactive and dialogic civic society.

Organizations are fully evolved in their use of social media when the majority of their posts are informational messages, and some posts include dialogic or action-oriented messages (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

This study found that both of the Planned Parenthood pages relied on the use of informational messages in all of their posts, while often using multiple functions on top of the informational function. Planned Parenthood Facebook pages used informational messages as the base for Facebook posts, while at times combining the informational messages with community or action based messages in their posts. The information messages used as the base for every post by both of the Planned Parenthood Facebook pages were used to provide highly significant and relevant material to the audience. The posts published were focused on important events occurring during the specific time period analyzed, which assured the posts were relevant to community members. Both Facebook pages combined specific communicative functions together to achieve the goal of a post with intertwined practices of engagement. For example, the *political climate* category was strategically combined with the *donation appeal* category to use the fear of the current political happenings to ask for supporters of the organization to donate money during the time of political uncertainty. I found that providing differing types of information in the Facebook posts, combined with the other communicative functions was a strategic decision for the organization to utilize the platform for multiple engagement purposes by Planned Parenthood. This study is practically significant because it can be used by nonprofit organizations to understand how they can improve their communication to community stakeholders on their social media pages.



One of the key strengths of our democratic system is that it allows individuals to join together and promote their ideas, values, and beliefs. Nonprofit organizations are a primary means for individuals to join together to promote these ideas, values, and beliefs, therefore advocacy is an important function of US nonprofit organizations (Child & Gronbjerg, 2007). This research provides practically significant insights to nonprofit advocacy organizations. According to Yoshioka (2014), nonprofit advocacy organizations can actually contribute to the democratic representation by educating the general public about certain policy issues. Planned Parenthood used Facebook as a platform for education about reproductive health and the policy issues surrounding it. This is practically significant to other nonprofit advocacy organizations as they can gain insights from this study about how they can use Facebook as a platform to provide timely information to educate community stakeholders about relevant topics and contribute to the democratic system by doing so.

The growing use of social media due to organizations' ability to use the platform as an interactive tool to engage with key publics on topics of interest beyond what traditional organization websites allowed for (Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003). This analysis of the two Planned Parenthood Facebook pages shows that Facebook was being used as a platform to engage with community stakeholders by providing information, building an online community, and calling community members to action. This platform was being used as an engagement tool beyond what the Planned Parenthood website would allow. This use of Facebook as an interactive engagement tool is practically significant for other similar organizations to understand how social media platforms can be used for interactive engagement to invite feedback and participation in ways that are not possible on typical organization websites.

Social media platforms can actually be used to revolutionize the way that organizations communicate with community stakeholders and key decision makers (Burger, 2015). Using social media platforms like Facebook to build communities and strengthen relationships could be considered the future of community stakeholder engagement. This study is practically significant as it shows other nonprofit organizations the significance of having a social media presence, and the different ways which their social media presence can be utilized to engage with community stakeholders and decision makers, as it appears the future of community stakeholder engagement involves the interactive use of social media.

This study is theoretically significant as it contributes to and expands on Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) information-community-action functions of social media by nonprofit organizations with an in-depth qualitative lens. Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) study analyzed 73 nonprofit organizations' which ranged represented a cross-section of the charitable sector. Their study contained a total of 4,655 tweets from the 73 nonprofit organizations' Twitter accounts. While Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) study provided important analytic insights about nonprofit organizations' use of Twitter Facebook, it did not provide the in-depth information that a qualitative study over one organization has. Throughout this study I expanded on Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) insights about how nonprofit organizations' use Twitter by analyzing Planned Parenthood's use of Facebook to see if the functions were generalizable beyond Twitter to other social media platforms. Using a qualitative approach, I was able to expand on the categories proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) study to better classify the functions of the messages being posted by two Planned Parenthood Facebook sites. I added three categories to the information function, including an *education* category, an *organizational purpose* category, and a *political climate* category. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) used information as one broad function,

but throughout my analysis, different types of information emerged from the data, therefore it was significant to categorize the different types of information being shared to expand the information category. I also added the *dialogue and storytelling* category to the previous categories proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) for the community function of social media. Throughout my analysis, the *dialogue and storytelling category* emerged as a way for Planned Parenthood to share community members' stories and positive experiences with the organization as a way to create open and positive dialogue about the organization. As this category emerged in the data, I added this it to the community function to expand the Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) findings.

Using a qualitative lens and focusing on two Facebook pages allowed me to gain insights about how the specific social media platform was being used by the Planned Parenthood organizations during a particular time period of political significance. This study also allowed more than one function to be assigned to each post, and nearly every post by both Facebook pages used more than one function. Using qualitative coding and allowing multiple functions to be coded for each post provided an overall better understanding of the intertwined practice of functions being used on Facebook by these specific pages. Allowing each post to be coded for multiple functions permitted me to gain insights on how the communicative functions overlapped and were being used together to understand the complex nature of the messages posted on Facebook. It would be overly simplistic to restrict the coding to only allowing one communicative function to each post published, and would not provide depth into the insights of the communicative functions and how they are used.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

While this study engaged in analysis that has provided a general understanding of the use of Facebook by Planned Parenthood during a highly significant time period, there are important limitations to be noted, and remarkable room for future research in the area. This study only focused on two Facebook pages run by Planned Parenthood organizations that are rooted in support of the same cause. It would be significant for future research to comparatively analyze different types of nonprofit organization against one another to see the differences in how the platform is being used. This would help us to understand whether organizations with differing viewpoints on a particular issue use Facebook differently to communicate with community stakeholders depending on their position on the issue.

There are several other directions which future research could be taken following this study. Future research should look at other types of nonprofit organizations with a variety of organizational missions to see if their use of social media aligns with the findings in this study, and the findings from Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). Future research would also benefit from analyzing which types of nonprofit organizations rely more heavily on the information, community, or action communicative functions of social media. This study focused on a very specific time period where Planned Parenthood faced uncertainty and legitimacy concerns due to the political climate during and following the 2016 Presidential Election. Future research should look at the two Planned Parenthood pages during different time periods to see how the platform is used during times when the organization is not directly under attack.

A mixed-methods analysis would be noteworthy for future researchers to gain a more generalizable understanding of the use of social media by nonprofit organizations, while also taking the data and going more in-depth with qualitative explanations of the social media use.

Future research using a mixed-methods approach would allow the researcher to look at a larger sample of varying types of nonprofit organizations, including both large, mid-size, and small organizations to gain a broader scope of insights than what was provided here and by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). A mixed-method study would provide important analytic insights about the frequency that each function is being used by different organizations, while also providing qualitative explanations for how the functions are being used by the organizations' based on the type of nonprofit and the specific type period that is being looked at.

### *Conclusion*

Planned Parenthood's use of social media is an important area to study, particularly considering nonprofit organizations are relying more heavily on social media tools to engage with the greater public. Planned Parenthood is a highly controversial organization and was an important topic of conversation during the 2016 Presidential Election. It was highly significant to look at how the organization used two of their Facebook pages during a time of uncertainty to communicate with the public. As of 2012, Planned Parenthood Action Fund and Planned Parenthood Federation of America employs 342 people in New York and Washington D.C. and 40 of these employees work in the communications division for the organization, and 18 employees work to control the organizations social media accounts (Perry, 2012). Studying the use of social media and the messages constructed by these Planned Parenthood organizations was of high significance as nonprofit organizations continue to rely heavily on social media applications to interact with community members. Social media is a tool that has left scholars questioning what the best practices look like for different types of organizations, therefore this is an important study as it contributes to organizational communication and social media literature

to provide insights about how two Facebook pages were used during a vital time for an organization to communicate with the greater public.

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