"SHEA MOISTURE IS CANCELLED": RACIALIZED IDENTIFICATION IN THE 2017 SHEA MOISTURE CRISIS

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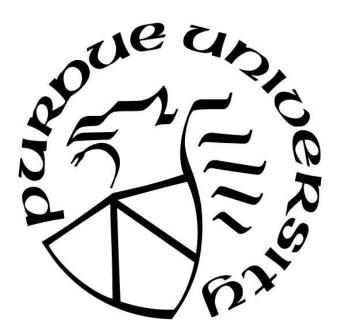
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For my parents, who are relentlessly supportive of every dream

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

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In 2017, Shea Moisture, a company that created natural hair products targeted primarily toward Black women, released an online video in which ostensibly white and multiracial women discussed the struggles they encountered in accepting their natural hair. This video led to a public relations crisis for the organization as a result of its perceived exclusion of the organization's core public--Black women with 4C hair, who arguably experience the highest levels of discrimination on account of their natural hair. This study explored the role of identity and identification in this crisis by conducting a qualitative content analysis of identification types in Black men and women's online responses to the video. Emotions present in the online posts were used as rhetorical indicators of deidentification, ambivalent identification, identification or disidentification. The findings of this study, contextualized within the socio-political context of the crisis, suggest that responses to Shea Moisture's video were informed by : its public's identification with one another, their construal and co-construction of the organization's identity as a Black business, and their identification with the organization on the basis of this identity. This study reinforces the role played by publics in co-constructing an organization's identity and reveals the importance of sociopolitical realities and uneven power relations to publics' identification. This study also introduces the concept of "protected identification" to describe a mode of identification that informed by a socio-political context wherein marginalization exists, comes with a unique set of expectations for the actions of an organization.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The historical marginalization of Black people has created societies across the globe within which Black hair, like many aspects of the Black body, is politicized. The manner in which Black people choose to style their hair is seldom free of implications derived from the hairstyle's adherence to or divergence from prevailing beauty standards. Whilst the use of chemical straighteners or weaves that approximate European hair is generally in conformity with prevailing Eurocentric beauty standards, the choice of Black people--women in particular--to wear their hair naturally is one that has come to be recognized since the 1960s as a form of resistance. Shea Moisture, a personal care brand that was eventually built into the company Sundial Brands[1] became associated with this form of resistance. It did so by producing organic hair products targeted toward the natural hair of Black women, a demographic largely overlooked by mainstream hair and beauty brands.

A 2015 Buzzfeed article titled "Shea Moisture is Proof of the Power of the Natural Hair Movement" stated that Shea Moisture's rising popularity was "evidence of the rising power of a consumer base previously overlooked by mainstream retailers and beauty brands alike" (Giorgis, 2015). Shea Moisture created products that were generally placed in the "ethnic" section of beauty products, where Black women and other people of color could find the products suited to their hair textures. Their products became a staple within the natural hair "community" and Shea Moisture enjoyed success without monumental controversy until 2017, when it released a series of videos for its #EverybodyGetsLove campaign. Most of these videos, all released within a short window

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[1] Subsequent references will be to "Shea Moisture" as opposed to "Sundial Brands" as the organization, because Shea Moisture, as one of the most recognizable brands under Sundial Brands' has a distinct identity and its own unique organizing elements.

of time, featured Black women discussing how they had come to embrace their natural hair, and received little attention. One in particular, however, went viral, creating a public relations crisis for the organization. This one-minute video about "hair hate," or discrimination encountered as a result of hair attributes, featured white women and one woman who appeared multiracial, completely excluding dark-skinned women with 4C textured hair[2]—the people who arguably face the most "hair hate" in society. Many viewed this move as akin to Shea Moisture turning its back on its core audience. The reaction provoked by this online video presents an opportunity to examine the ways in which identification with a particular organization in a racialized socio-political context can play an important role in public relations.

Identification, according to Mael and Ashforth (1992) compels one to view the successes and failures of an organization as one's own. In order to understand the construct of identification in its entirety, it is important to understand the role that organizational identity plays in the process of identification. Exploring both of these variables—organizational identity and identification—is a timely effort as the identities of organizations are increasingly being questioned by publics. Identity and identification are always relevant to the human experience. Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) stated that organizations, individuals, and people need to know their identities in order to "interact effectively with other entities" (p. 13).

As a result of its relationship with personal identities, the realities of contemporary society make organizational identification increasingly complex. Diversity and the differences in the lived experiences of people of different backgrounds are more in the forefront of consciousness than they perhaps have ever been. In the United States context, personal identity is fraught by tensions inherent in histories of marginalization and subjugation. Ideals of autonomy and self-

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[2] On a classification scale for hair textures created by Andre Walker, 4C is the thickest form of afro-textured hair ("Andre Walker hair typing system", n.d.)

determination, juxtaposed by a history of the oppression of minorities, has created a legacy of racial and political tension. The identifications of individuals who constitute and interact with organizations and the identity of organizations, are necessarily rife with implications derived from this socio-political context and should not be divorced from it. Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) posited that as organization environments grow more dynamic and complex, organizations become more organic. This is especially relevant as accusations of corporate racism or racial discrimination by organizations make it increasingly clear that organizations exist within racialized spaces. Accusations about organizational racism are on the rise and often occur when an organization is perceived to have taken an action that is discriminatory or in opposition to the welfare of people of color (e.g., the recent cases of Starbucks, Papa John's, H&M, United Airlines, the NFL).

The racialized nature of the organizational environment and its implications for identification are also exposed when organizations that cater primarily to minority publics attempt to appeal to a wider demographic and face backlash. In Shea Moisture's case, consumer publics responded largely with disappointment and hurt when the company, which is Black-owned, released an online video featuring women from a racial group other than their core demographic. A phrase that some consumers used to express disappointment with the brand was, "Shea Moisture is cancelled." Based on the definition of a crisis by Coombs (2010) as "a function of perception based on the violation of a strongly held belief" (p. 100), this case falls into the category of a crisis. This case also falls into the category of a crisis both as a result of the quantity and valence of the online posts—frequent and negative enough to make the organization a trending topic on Twitter— and because the organization was forced to manage the situation by crafting a response on Facebook as well as replying to individual comments.

A cursory assessment of the online posts reveals that identification with Shea Moisture might have played a defining role in the crisis. Identification in this case can be informed and shaped by both the racial identities of the publics who are minorities and the identity that the organization acquires in catering primarily to them. Because the organization developed a core consumer public whose members have a shared racial identity with one another, the organization's identity became inextricably connected to that identity. Publics' identification with the organization's perceived identity can result in strongly held expectations about the organization that when unmet, alter or break identification completely. As the importance of race to the socio-political context of crises become more apparent, it is imperative that communication scholars take a closer look at how these complex environments influence identification and inform crises.

The online reactions to the controversial video create an opportunity to see how the dynamics of organizational identification work in a crisis concerning racial minority publics and an organization that has historically catered primarily to them. For this study, I conducted a qualitative content analysis of the social media posts in reaction to the controversial video, exploring the ways in which members of consumer publics expressed sentiments related to various forms of identification.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The 2017 Shea Moisture crisis involved an organization's identity and the identifications of its publics to it. The marginalization of Black people in the United States, as well as the peculiar challenges historically faced by Black businesses, made the socio-political context of this crisis particularly relevant. Before this crisis, Shea Moisture engaged in cause-related marketing by disseminating messages that celebrated diversity in beauty and encouraged women to embrace their natural attributes. For many black women, doing so despite the discrimination they experienced based on those attributes, constituted a form of resistance. The unique considerations around marketing targeted toward minoritized groups like Black people has previously caused scholars to classify these groups as an example of "sensitive". These concepts (organizational identification and identity, cause-related marketing and "sensitive groups") and others pertinent to the current study, are expounded upon below, using relevant extant literature.

2.1 Organizational Identification and Identity

Organizational communication literature recognizes identification as highly important to individuals' relationships with organizations. Sass and Canary (1991) posited that members of an organization must be identified with it in order to be committed to it. Likewise, Scott et al. (1999) noted that identification with an organization influences turnover rates within that organization.

As two variables that act mutually upon one another, identification is often studied alongside identity. Expounding on the relationship between both constructs, Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) stated the following:

Another part of the power of identity and identification derives from the integrative and generative capacity of these constructs. Identity and identification are terms that travel easily across levels of analysis. They simultaneously convey distinctiveness and oneness (e.g., of an organization, group, or individual), while allowing for blurring, multiplicity and dynamism in identity content and process. As noun (identity) and verb (identify), they can be used as versatile concepts, frames or tools that open up possibilities for theoretical development and revelation. (p.13)

Scott, Corman & Cheney (1998) proposed the structurational theory of identification that conceptualized identification both as "the process of emerging identity" (p. 304) and as attached to certain identity structures. Within this structure, acts of identification expose the identity structures to which they are attached. Kuhn and Nelson (2002) applied this duality in an empirical study that revealed that identity and identification cooperate with one another. They posited that identity is both a medium and an outcome, and identification is a discursive process. Identities are then both sources of and targets for identification (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). According to these scholars, the individual is not just being shaped by the identity structures to which their identifications are attached, but they are simultaneously shaping them too (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). To understand identification and the way it functions in tandem with identity to impact organizations, it is imperative to take into account rhetoric and group membership, both of which are inherent to the process of identification.

Burke's (1950) conceptualization of identification established its relationship with rhetoric and consequently, persuasion. According to Burke (1950), one becomes identified with a rhetor to the extent that one is convinced of similarity between oneself and the rhetor. When this occurs, each maintain their own individuality yet become substantially one. Identification within this

framework is inherently persuasive, only occurring after one has been convinced of similarity. Burkean identification brings rhetoric into focus and enables scholars to see organizations in light of rhetorical labor to create identification with their publics. Identification is shown as fluid, with the rhetor lacking full control over the identifications that a group member can make. Looking at identification through these lenses, scholars have applied it to a variety of contexts and attempted to understand the rhetorical indicators of identification. Supporting and expanding Burke's (1950) position of persuasion as embedded in identification, Cheney (1983) proposed that identification might be established by emphasis on common ground, antithesis, the use of the assumed or transcendent "we," and unifying symbols.

Burkean identification places importance on the individual's personal identity. Tajfel and Turner (1986), in their landmark Social Identity Theory, established the role of group membership in the establishment of one's personal (social) identity. Social identity theory postulates that both identity and identification stem from group membership. Thus, one conceptualizes oneself based on the group that person is a part of, and derives self-esteem based on how that identified group compares with other groups. SIT also explains that identification occurs as a result of a natural preference for one's own group. By virtue of group membership alone, one inherently prefers one's own group to the outgroup. Hostility might develop between unevenly empowered members of the in-group and the out-group, depending on the perception of the potential for social mobility, and how deserving one understands the other to be of its empowered position. Furthermore, within Social Identity Theory, identification with one's own group is said to be enhanced when the organization is distinctive from others, when organizational "outgroups" are prominent, and when competition exists between the organization and these outgroups (Pratt, 2000).

The impact of SIT, and indeed identification, is necessarily grounded in socio-political contexts and cannot be divorced from power structures in society that lead to subjugation of groups of people in favor of others. SIT acknowledges that group membership does not just affect individuals' self-concept when the "group" is the organization, but also when the "group" is a race or ethnic group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1986) posited that marginalized groups use a number of strategies to construct positive identities in light of their marginalization, including comparing themselves to out-groups on a new dimension and changing the value attached to their own group's attributes, for example by asserting that "Black is beautiful". Likewise, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) in an analysis of workers engaged in marginalized occupations, found that workers applied various strategies to construct a social identity which enhances their self-esteem, including reframing, recalibrating, and refocusing the nature and meaning of their work. Existing scholarship thus shows that individuals who are identified with marginalized groups are actively involved in constructing a positive social identity in response and resistance to the marginalization of the groups with which they are identified.

Studies on identification have shown that when positive identification with a group is no longer possible, other identifications take its place. Pratt's (2000) conceptualization of identification is based on social identity theory and sees identification as a sensemaking activity. According to him, people become identified with organizations insofar as those organizations create a sense of meaning for people. When there is a void of meaning, other identifications become present including deidentification, disidentification, and ambivalent identification. Disidentification occurs when an individual identifies themselves "in opposition to an organization" (Pratt, 2000, p. 23). When an individual is disidentified with an organization, their self-conceptualization is antagonistic to that organization. Ambivalent identification is

characterized by holding mixed feelings toward an organization (Pratt, 2000). Finally, deidentification refers to the absence of identification (Pratt, 2000). Individuals who are deidentified with an organization do not have their identity attached to strong positive or negative feelings toward it.

Today, identity and identification are concepts that are relevant to public relations as increasingly, public relations crises fueled by activist publics are situated online. Crisis communication scholars have acknowledged the need for crisis communication to evolve along with the increasing pervasiveness of computer-mediated communication (Veil, Buehner, & Palenchar, 2011). A survey commissioned by the World Economic Forum in 2016 showed that social media increased people's civic participation and involvement as well as made them feel more personally empowered (Gregory, 2016). As some scholars have acknowledged that the nature of crises is evolving, others have acknowledged that so are people. According to Turkle (2011), not only does computer-mediated communication allow people to inhabit their identities online, but it also gives them the opportunity to extend that identity. Thus, people don't just have the opportunity to be themselves online, but they have the opportunity to be a transformed self online. Vecchione et al. (2014) showed in a cross-national study that basic values of individuals inform their activism in the political sphere. This shows the importance of individuals' personal orientation to their activism. Cozier and Witmer (2001) also posited that the internet provides an environment wherein new types of publics may organize as a result of their interaction and the resulting mutual influence on each's meaning systems, a reality that Taylor, Kent and White (2001) stated can pose a challenge to the traditional approach to public relations. According to L.A. Grunig's (1992) definition of activists as "a group of two or more individuals who organize to influence another public or publics through action" (p. 504), these types of publics can become

activist publics when they mobilize against an organization. Thus, social media allows people who have strong, personal views informed by their identities to mobilize easily against organizations.

In several cases where activist publics online are mobilized against an organization, their complaints center around questions of the organization's identity, a construct shown by scholars to be inextricably linked to the identification. Identity and identification have a mutual relationship because identification is rooted in identity structures (Albert, et al., 2000; Kuhn & Nelson, 2002; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). Recent examples of organizations whose identities have been called into question include Nivea, Dove and H&M, corporations which have all recently been accused of racism. The accusation of racism is an accusation concerning morality and ideology, concepts that are steeped in organizational identity, and threaten the identification of an increasingly activist-oriented public. Publics who are prompted to view an organization as racist will likely find that there is little similarity between themselves and the organization, particularly if they belong to the community targeted by the event or policy construed as racist. Despite the trend of contemporary events and the scholarship that suggests the relevance of identification to today's crises, there is still a dearth of research that probes the relevance of this construct to public relations crises today.

One of the reasons for the lack of attention to identification in crisis communication might be that identification, alongside identity, is often studied exclusively within the realm of organizational collectives and the employees that operate within them. However, although brands are sometimes differentiated from an organization's identity and the identifications that identity might invite, branding is an important part of how an organization's identity is construed by its publics, and therefore informs organizational identity. Thus, scholars have made arguments for eroding this distinction. Cornelissen, Haslam and Balmer (2007) and Hatch and Schultz (1997)

argued that the internal organizational context is informed by the external, and vice versa. Greyser (2009) asserted that the most significant crises are those which involve an element "essential" to an organization's brand, and that an organization should be cognizant not only of what it thinks its own identity is, but what other publics think it is.

This view of identity as co-constructed with an organization's stakeholders is divergent from classical models of organizational identity that conceptualized it as a construct communicatively transmitted from an organization to its audience. An overview of the shift from this model was offered by Cornelissen, Christensen and Kinuthia (2012), who also proposed a new model for construct clarity in organizational communication. According to these scholars, a constitutive model of corporate identity is more fitting, and would emphasize the process of co-construction that occurs between an organization and stakeholders. Critiquing the classical model, Cornelissen, Christensen and Kinuthia (2012, p. 1096) stated that "the notion of a 'communicated identity' as something separate and distinguishable from other dimensions of the organization's identity... misses the point that there is no identity outside the realm of communication" and again that "any 'agreement' on what an organization's identity is effectively lies in the act and event of communication itself" (p. 1099). Scott and Lane (2000) also argued that organizations' attempts to stimulate identification with stakeholders may cause them to become to become identified with one another, and to "act collectively to further their own interests" (p. 58).

Embracing the constitutive model of organizational identity through this lens, as something that is jointly created with an organization's publics, makes it more evident that identity exists as a temporary product or outcome of meaning making (Cornelissen, Christensen, & Kinuthia, 2012). Additionally, it reveals the ways in which varying and opposing layers of meaning, understanding and misunderstandings can arise in the process of identity construction (Christensen &

Cornelissen, 2013). Furthermore, an emphasis on and a foregrounding of the communicative process by which organizational identity emerges highlights the potentially immense impact of the socio-political context in which an organization operates on its identity, and the consequent effect that this can have on the identification of publics. Acker (2006) argued that organizations function as sites for the production of many societal inequalities. Scott et al. (1998) also stated that an organization's identity can include industry, community, nation and more.

Furthermore, many scholars have made it evident that racial minorities have a much different experience of organizations and institutions than the racial majority. Haley, Jaeger, and Levin (2014) have shown that cultural social identities of African American college students had an influence on their career choices after graduate school. Bell and Nkomo (2001) conducted a study featuring African American and white women executives which showed that the racial identity and experiences of the former made them conceptualize themselves differently than the latter. Whilst white women only had to deal with gender discrimination, Black women had to deal with that in addition to racial discrimination. Furthermore, Seamster and Ray (2017) argued that in the same way organizations can now be seen as gendered, they should also be seen as racialized.

However, literature on racialized organizational identity, and the consequent identification of racial minorities with them, is still very young. There hasn't been a lot of scholarship that has interrogated the identification of racial minorities as external publics with organizations, and specifically with organizations that have them as the target demographic. Asante (1990) has argued for the existence of a limiting ethnocentric paradigm in communication studies that centralizes the knowledge coming from developing countries in the west. Likewise, Sriramesh (2001) called for a more global approach to public relations that takes into account the varied social, cultural and political contexts in which public relations takes place. To heed this call for more diverse

perspectives, more research needs to be done to interrogate the identifications of racial minorities with organizations, particularly those that cater primarily to their needs.

Thus, it is not only important to study the ways in which identity and identification impact how people relate with brands, but also the ways in which this is racialized, impacting some populations in different ways that others.

2.2 Cause-Related Marketing and "Sensitive Groups"

Organizations like Shea Moisture often try to communicatively participate in the construction of their identity and garner support from publics through cause-related marketing. Cause-related marketing (CRM) entails corporations aligning themselves with a cause and publicly providing resources or advocacy in support of that cause. Although this kind of marketing can be used for health and other types of causes that do not readily appear politically charged, corporations also often take a stand on issues that could be perceived as more contentious, or on behalf of marginalized populations. Around the 1990s, the use of this marketing tactic was on the rise, for reasons including an increasing general discontent with marketing, a shift in values towards moral stability and an increase in the alternatives on the market (Macchiette & Roy, 1994). According to He, Zhu, Gouran and Kolo, (2016) CRM "enables consumers to enact certain social identities, such as moral identity (MI)" (p. 237) and individuals with a lower moral identity are less impacted by it. Revealing again the importance of identity to CRM, Winterich and Barone (2011) posited that self-construal (an inclination to be either inter-dependent or highly individualistic) and cause-related social identities and social identification play a role in consumers' choices between discounted products and products with attached CRM donations. These scholars thus reveal the importance of consumers' identities and identifications in marketing.

Macchiette and Roy (1994) used the term "sensitive groups" to refer to " a segment of the population generally perceived as being disadvantaged, vulnerable, discriminated against, or involved in social issues which consequently influence their consumer behavior" (p. 58). Macchiette and Roy (1994) called for careful research in marketing to these groups, acknowledging that poorly handled marketing targeted towards these groups may result in boycotts and other crises. Elaborating on the concept of sensitive publics, Macchiette and Roy (1994) stated that, i) the extent of a group's sensitivity is contingent upon the degree of attention they are currently receiving from the public, ii) everyone has probably been a member of a sensitive group at one point in their lifetime, and iii) an individual or a group of people might be considered "sensitive" on various dimensions. One example of sensitive groups provided by these scholars are racial minorities.

2.3 Racial Discrimination in Beauty

Oppression on the basis of race has been explored widely on both systemic and interpersonal dimensions, as has oppression against women. A consciousness of the fact that oppression can occur on various frontiers of identity, and simultaneously, led to the coining of the term "intersectionality" by Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality provided a new way to look at the the experiences of Black women in society, who were and continue to be "multiply burdened" as a result of the discrimination they face on account of their race and gender.

Although the specific elements of beauty in the United States have shifted over the past decades, one thing that has remained constant is that the women considered most ideal have been white women (Sekayi, 2003). The global appeal of this Eurocentric ideal of beauty has been ascribed to globalization, and the proliferation of images in global media featuring tall, blond women (Berry, 2007). Robinson-Moore (2008) stated that although beauty standards appear to be

normal, they actually constitute a form of social control. African-American women in the U.S., specifically, have faced the conflict of abiding by the beauty standards consistent with their heritage, or adopting the beauty standards of the white majority (Makkar & Strube, 1995). This can be traced back to the period of slavery in the United States, when enslaved people with features closer to those of white people received preferential treatment from slave owners. Enslaved people who worked in the fields were disproportionately dark skinned with "pure" African ancestry, whereas those with white fathers and fairer skin were sometimes emancipated and could then pass on some privileges to their children (Keith & Herring, 1991). After slavery was abolished in the United States, Black people with more Eurocentric features continued to enjoy affluence within the Black U.S. population, and membership into exclusive African-American social groups such as the blue vein society (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1986). People with Black and white ancestry continued to enjoy privileges for fifty years following emancipation (Keith and Herring, 1991). Keith and Herring (1991) found that skin tone was a better predictor of occupation and income among African Americans than other factors, including the socioeconomic status of one's parents. Robinson-Moore (2008) found that African-American women internalize these beauty standards, and women who were lighter skinned with longer hair reported more social acceptance, higher levels of confidence and more individual successes than their counterparts with darker skin and shorter hair.

In the 1960s, the tide seemed to change when African American women started adopting a Black cultural aesthetic to resist the prevailing one. However, the economic imperative to fit in and succeed in a predominantly white corporate world in the U.S. made it necessary for them to abandon this aesthetic, which included afros and dashikis, in favor of the mainstream Eurocentric one (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1986).

2.4 Black Entrepreneurship

After slavery was abolished, previously enslaved people understood that seeking economic independence was a way to express their freedom (Gill, 2010). Both W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington expressed interest in and advocated Black entrepreneurship in the late nineteenth century. In the 1890s, The National Negro Business League was established by Booker T. Washington. As correspondence secretary of the Fourth Conference for the Study of Negro Problems at Atlanta University, DuBois conducted a survey of male and female Black entrepreneurs; few women spoke, however, and their efforts were marginalized. In 1900, Sarah Breedlove and Annie Malone pioneered an industry for Black hair products and moved women "into the center of the discourse surrounding race and entrepreneurship" (Gill, 2010, p. 8). Eventually, Black women would leverage their entrepreneurial endeavors for their activism and political efforts to create social change (Gill, 2010).

Undertaking a case study of the ethnic beauty aid industry in Chicago, Silverman (1998) argued that the evolution of the industry has been shaped by racism and discrimination. According to Silverman (1998), after emerging as a Black institution in the years between the Great Migration and the Great Depression, and overcoming the barriers in the way of economic participation for African Americans, the ethnic beauty aids industry was able to withstand the economic and social turbulence resulting from the division between whites and Blacks in society. In the period from the Civil Rights movement up until 1990, Black manufacturers began to "lose ground" to white conglomerate institutions. Claude A. Barnett, who owned Kashmir Chemical Company, was the first manufacturer to use positive as opposed to negative advertisements to market beauty products. Instead of using unattractive women and persuading Black consumers not to look like them, Kashmir made use of Black models and celebrities, promoting his products through the Black press and enjoying high sales. Kashmir Chemical Company eventually dissolved a few years after it was

forced to change its name following a legal battle with Procter and Gamble, who had a similar line of products named "Cashmere." Before it finally dissolved, Nile Queen, as it was newly named, used advertisements that celebrated "the matchless browns" and the "satiny, glossy dark skin of the Colored Woman." Nile Queen's message became increasingly positive, and as a company, it self-identified as a "Race Business" (Silverman,1998).

According to Silverman (1998), "racial identity was an important resource to Black businesses" (p. 576). Black businesses also enjoyed a closer relationship with one another as a result of the existence of larger mainstream companies. A series of letters exchanged between Kashmir Chemical Company and the attorney of another Black-owned beauty company, detail the latter accusing the former of spreading rumors about having sold out to "some white person or concern." In response, Kashmir Chemical Company appealed for racial solidarity (Silverman, 1998).

Furthermore, Black business strategies were shaped by the institutional discrimination they experienced. Another Black entrepreneur, Overton, as a result of the scrutiny placed on Black businesses at the time had to "emphasize his openness to white Americans, particularly in the area of hiring." According to Silverman (1998) "to be successful, Black businesses had to treat Black consumers with respect, while simultaneously proving to mainstream society that they did not favor Blacks over whites" (p. 580). Silverman (1998) detailed the experiences of yet another Black entrepreneur, S.B Fuller, who was initially so successful that he purchased another white-owned business, penetrating the mainstream markets. Fuller first clashed with the civil rights movement because he believed that Black people needed to reason with white people instead of protesting, and that economic empowerment was the path to progress for the Black race. However, soon, a white supremacist group in the south boycotted Fuller's business to retaliate against boycotts

staged by Blacks in the south, causing Fuller to lose 60% of his profit. This made him increasingly conscious about making sure that his Black employees were not biased against white ones, and "reinforced the notion of Blacks as second class citizens" (p. 586). The eventual downfall of Fuller's organization resulted from him voicing his views and undermining the role of racial barriers before a mainstream--as opposed to predominantly African American--audience. After a speech at the National Association of Manufacturers, his products were boycotted by African Americans, a move that he never understood (Silverman, 1998). The downfall of Fuller's enterprise, however, reveals the way that the racial climate and larger institutional forces affected Black entrepreneurs in their efforts to penetrate and thrive in the mainstream market (Silverman, 1998). These historical examples speak to the complexities of Black capitalism in the United States.

According to Hill and Rabig (2012) "throughout the twentieth century African Americans' attempts to improve their economic standing mirrored their efforts to elevate their political and social position" (p. 16). Edmondson and Carrol (1999) also found in a study of Black-owned businesses that minority owned business had a stronger philanthropic motivation than non-minority firms. This also supports the idea that Black entrepreneurs occupy a unique space in the market.

The current study examines the 2017 Shea Moisture case in which a Black-owned natural hair product company released an online video that excluded Black women with 4C textured hair, much to the outrage of its publics. Central to this case was Shea Moisture's identity and the identifications of its core public to it. The types of identification established in extant literature are identification, disidentification, deidentification and ambivalent identification. The research question for this study is:

RQ1 What types of identifications are present in online responses to Shea Moisture's crisis?

CHAPTER 3: 2017 SHEA MOISTURE CRISIS

The natural hair movement birthed during the civil rights era encouraged Black women to abandon chemical relaxers and straighteners and find beauty and comfort in their own hair as it grew from their head. The countercultural movement empowered Black women to resist Eurocentric standards of beauty in favor of their own natural looks. However, in the 1980s, straight hairstyles regained popularity (Henderson, 2015), and it wasn't until the 2000s that the natural hair movement experienced a renaissance. As more women began to turn away from the use of chemical relaxers, they looked to companies that made products for women with natural hair. One such company is Shea Moisture, a billion-dollar company that was founded in 1991, ("From Sierra Leone to the Streets of New York: The Story of Shea Moisture", 2012).

In order to understand members of Shea Moisture's consumer publics' identification with the organization, it is important to acknowledge Shea Moisture's racialized identity. According to Seamster and Ray (2017), organizations become racialized when racial meaning is embedded within them. As a result of the socio-political context in which Shea Moisture is positioned, the company's own messaging and the space it occupies as a brand that makes natural hair products marketed towards Black women, Shea Moisture has a racialized identity. Although Eurocentric beauty standards are arguably growing less dominant in the U.S., the organization operates within a national context where as recently as 2014, the Department of Defense banned afros, dreadlocks, twists and braids in its guidelines for professional appearance in a controversial policy that was not revised for five months (Abdullah, 2014). In 2018, against Transportation Security Administration policy, many Black women (including the author) still experience airport security personnel digging their fingers into their hair to search for outlawed or threatening substances. A ProPublica report found that TSA machines themselves are likelier to have false alarms for

hairstyles popular among women of color (Medina, ProPublica & Frank, 2019). Thus by catering to a marginalized public in a manner that other mainstream beauty companies did not, Shea Moisture and its identity, inadvertently or otherwise, became subsumed in a larger movement of resistance.

Although the organization often used ambiguous language such as "every woman" and "every hair texture" to refer to its market and never explicitly expressed an intention to cater exclusively to Black women, other aspects of its messaging suggested otherwise. Self-congruence theory in marketing states that people will be more attached to a brand, like Shea Moisture, when it reflects who they are (Wang, Zhang, & Lee, 2013). Graphics of Black women were on the packaging for some of Shea Moisture's product lines. On the company's YouTube channel are several natural hair styling tutorials from 2014 that feature Black women. Furthermore, on its official website and elsewhere, Shea Moisture traces its origins to an ancestor in the family that sold handmade beauty products in a village in Sierra Leone, Africa. The "our story" page on the website for Shea Moisture's parent company, Sundial Brands, retells this story, adding: "Today, our uncompromising focus on research and innovation enables us to continuously explore holistic and culturally authentic practices and ingredients from around the globe and incorporate them into the unique skin and hair care formulations of our brands" ("Our Story", 2018). By foregrounding this origin story both on these pages and elsewhere, Shea Moisture not only underscores the material authenticity of its products as organic—an ideal espoused within the natural hair community—but the organization's own cultural authenticity as historically Black African. Additionally, as a certified B corporation, Shea Moisture was committed to giving back to the community by supporting women's empowerment in the United States and on the African continent.

Shea Moisture's products, like other Black hair products, were typically placed in the smaller, "ethnic" hair section of stores. Before the video that will be the subject of this study, Shea Moisture released two other messages that, in hindsight, foreshadowed the company's move toward a broader market. The first one was a social media photo it posted on its Twitter page that featured a white child complaining about running out of Shea Moisture. The online reaction to this ad was critical but muted, with a relatively small crowd accusing the company of failing to represent its core audience. In response, Shea Moisture tweeted the following:

No ad. No agenda. As a certified minority-owned business, we are so proud of our heritage, our community and how far we've come — from a village market in Sierra Leone, to the streets of Harlem, to retailers throughout the U.S. With your support, we've been able to bring change, diversity and variety to retail. We hope you continue to join us in celebrating how the versatility of our products can help people everywhere. (Rogers, 2015)

The second message released was an online video for Shea Moisture's #breakthewalls campaign. It featured a Black woman reflecting on the exclusion she felt by having to shop for products from the "ethnic" section of stores as opposed to the "beauty" section, where the products that catered to other hair textures were. In the video, the Black woman curls her finger around a few strands of her hair, tension builds, and there is soon chaos as hair products fly off the shelves unto the ground. When she releases the strand and opens her eyes, she's standing at the "beauty" section, and Shea Moisture is now on the shelf. The video concludes as the featured Black girl smiles and an optimistic voice says, "we are Shea Moisture and now, we can be found in the beauty aisle, where we all belong." Reactions to this video were mixed, with some people explicitly agreeing with the company and cheering them on for taking on an important cause, and a handful of others accusing them of disguising their attempt to become mainstream.

In 2017, however, Shea Moisture released, as part of a broader campaign featuring hair stories of Black women, one video that provoked stronger feelings. The sentiments that could only be discerned from a few dissenting voices with the Twitter photograph and the #breakthewalls video were overwhelming with the third. This one-minute video featured a light-skinned, ostensibly multiracial woman--the main personality--and three white women discussing "hair hate" or the forms of discrimination they had experienced as a result of the attributes of their hair. The women who arguably face the most "hair hate" in society—Black women with 4C textured hair—were excluded from the video.

After this video was released, Shea Moisture faced its first significant crisis. On various social media platforms, Shea Moisture's consumer publics expressed sentiments of outrage, disappointment and betrayal at the company. Most of the criticism was directed at the organization's decision to emulate society's erasure of natural Black hair, despite the fact that the company had only grown as a result of the loyalty of Black women with natural hair. Soon after the widespread negative response, Shea Moisture released a Facebook statement that some praised as very well done (Harwood, 2017), in which, using colloquial language and informal diction, they apologized for the misstep and re-affirmed their unwavering loyalty to their original consumer base. In November 2017, it was announced that Shea Moisture's parent company, Sundial Brands, was acquired by Unilever. This acquisition is significant not only because it follows the trend of some other major Black-owned businesses in the past, but also because it seemed to confirm the anxieties that surrounded the 2017 online video.

This case presents an interesting scenario wherein an organization was plunged into crisis for trying to do what many organizations can easily get away with—widen its consumer base. To understand what exactly informed the reaction to this online video, this study looks for types of

identification in the consumers' responses and contextualizes them in the socio-political space that Shea Moisture occupies.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS

I conducted a qualitative content analysis of the reaction by consumer publics on Twitter to the controversial online video released by Shea Moisture. This was done by accessing the publicly available posts on the widely used microblogging site, Twitter.com. I chose to focus specifically on this site for various reasons pertinent to the central question of this study.

First, this study was created to gain insight into the basis of the emotional responses that many Black women had to the online video released by Shea Moisture. As a result of the time that had elapsed since this online video was released (nearly two years as of this writing), it would be arduous to get the same immediate and pointed responses available online through interviews or focus groups. Additionally, the immediacy of the online environment provides insight into people's first impressions and unfiltered reaction, not only to the online video itself, but to other people's reactions to the online video.

I chose to focus on the responses available on Twitter specifically, as opposed to other online platforms, because of the unique ways in which this social networking site allows for dialogue. Whilst individuals did respond to the online video on Facebook as well, because these responses were largely posted as reviews of the organization itself, the potential for dynamic discourse was restricted.

Furthermore, the space that Twitter engenders for authentic dialogue and community specifically for Black users, often referred to as "Black Twitter," has been recognized in the media, in scholarship and by members of this online community themselves as an important cultural phenomenon. African Americans have a disproportionately high use of Twitter, and are often the originators of many viral and popular trends and trending topics on the social networking site. Whilst the existence of a monolithic, cohesive "Black Twitter" has been rightly disputed by

thought leaders and scholars (e.g., Florini, (2014)), there is significant evidence that Twitter provides a unique space for online interaction and social networking for African Americans. Brock (2012) defined "Black Twitter" as "a 'social public'; a community constructed through their use of social media by outsiders and insiders alike" (p. 530). According to this scholar, this "group" was formed as a result of observations of the group's practices from both people within and outside of the group (Brock, 2012). Thus, "Black Twitter" is a productive space for examining discourses relevant to Black individuals on the online sphere.

I conducted a manual, qualitative content analysis of the data I collected on responses to Shea Moisture in this online space. Qualitative analysis has the goal of "subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). A qualitative content analysis was an appropriate choice for the current study because I was looking for nuances within online responses and also allowing for new themes to emerge. Furthermore, Cheney and Tompkins (1987) stated that identification occurs through language, making a qualitative analysis of this nature a fitting choice for this study.

4.1 Data Sourcing

Twitter has an advanced search function that enables users to search for tweets containing certain keywords, from certain accounts and or within certain time frames. I used this tool to find tweets containing the keywords "Shea Moisture" from April 24, 2017-April 25, 2017. I chose this time frame because this was when the online video went viral and people were commenting most intensively. I collected all of the tweets by Black men and women designated "top tweets" by Twitter, which was a total of 232 tweets. According to Twitter's support website, top tweets are curated through an algorithm that selects the tweets with the highest levels of engagement ("Search

Results FAQs", 2019). These tweets are meant to be largely representative of the general trend of the discourse surrounding a given subject. Top tweets have been used in the past to conduct Twitter-based research (e.g., Lyles, Lopez, Pasick, et. al, 2013). I also analyzed 162 additional, "latest" tweets from the chronological results on Twitter's search engine, for a total of 394 tweets. Almost 100 of these tweets were from men. The difference in the overall sentiments expressed in these chronological tweets and the top tweets did not appear significant, suggesting that this sample achieved saturation. I used profile characteristics to judge the demographics of the users, as well as other explicit identity cues such as "as a Black woman," or "we Black women." I did not use tweets when I was in doubt of the users' identity. I also did not make any attempts to communicate with these users.

4.2. Formulation of Coding Scheme

The method that I used to analyze the data for this study is directed content analysis. This is a method whereby data is analyzed with an initial code, but as researchers engage in their analysis, they allow further codes to emerge (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I used this method for my content analysis because there is no established code for themes of identification with tweets, making this a largely novel method of analysis. As the unit of analysis for my coding, tweets are unique because of their brevity (280 characters maximum).

After a pilot analysis of about 30 tweets, my coding revealed four main themes of betrayal, anger, abandonment, and doubt (examples for each are available in the appendix). I used these emotions as rhetorical indicators of identification types, categorizing each and other themes that emerged, under related identification types. There were no strong sentiments of support for Shea Moisture found in these initial tweets, but further analysis found support expressed in varying ways for Shea Moisture. I began my analysis looking for these themes, remaining open to the emergence

of other themes as well. Once I labeled the themes present in tweets, I further analyzed how those themes fit into standard as well as nonstandard types of identification, including deidentification, ambivalent identification, and disidentification.

Burke (1950) conceptualized of identification as arising out of division. In other words, because individuals are separate, they can become compelled to identify, or create consubstantiality, with one another. Burke (1950) also posited that rhetoric is inherent to the process of identification. The category for identification replicates the application of Burkean identification to organizational communication by Cheney (1983). According to Cheney (1983), identification by individuals occurs in response to societal divisions. Cheney (1983) emphasized that an organization "facilitates" identification through its communication. According to this scholar, "the organization 'initiates' this inducement process by communicating its values, goals, and information (i.e., the organization's own stated 'identifications') in the form of guidelines for individual and collective action; the member may then 'complete' the process by adopting or adapting the organization's interests, doing 'what's best' for the organization, and perhaps even developing a salient identification with the organization as a target" (p. 347). I adopted Cheney's (1983) operationalization of identification strategies for the study of organizational communication as themes under the "identification" category of this study. The strategies are: the common ground technique, identification through antithesis, unifying symbols and the transcendent or assumed "we." Common ground is used by rhetors who explicitly establish a connection with themselves and the audience. This strategy entails communicating shared goals or values with an audience in a manner that might "offer him or her 'identity'" (Cheney, 1983, p. 148). Rhetors utilizing this strategy might point to a shared marginalized identity, or a shared community. Identification through antithesis involves "uniting against a common enemy"

(Cheney, 1983, p. 148). Rhetors using this strategy might discuss the importance of unity in fighting discriminatory beauty ideals. The use of the transcendent or "assumed we" entails using those pronouns and similar ones to establish identification. Persons using this strategy will explicitly use words like "we," "our," and "us." Finally, familiar unifying symbols, such as images of symbolic significance, might be evoked by rhetors to promote identification. Whilst these are strategies used by organizations to invite identification, the rationale for applying them to publics is that while organizations have an incentive to stimulate identification from their publics, publics who use these strategies without such incentives in doing so express an authentic identification with the organization.

The categories for disidentification, ambivalent identification, and deidentification were developed based on Pratt's (2000) definition. According to Pratt (2000), when sensemaking efforts by the organization fail, other identifications become present including deidentification, disidentification, and ambivalent identification. Connaughton and Williams (2012) stated that individuals have agency in this process as the "source" of identification, with the organization as the "target." According to Pratt (2000), disidentification has occurred when an individual "identifies oneself in opposition to the organization" (p. 23). This entails assuming an identity that it purposely opposed to that of the organization. Rhetors are ambivalently identified when they are "pulled in two different directions" (Pratt, 2000, p. 26). Ambivalently identified individuals might have positive feelings toward some aspect of the organization, and negative feelings towards other aspects. Finally, deidentification describes a state in which identification is "nonexistent or broken" (Pratt, 2000, p. 22). In this case, individuals have neutral feelings toward an organization, and cannot be described as being "identified" with it.

New themes for identification, disidentification and neutral identification emerged following further analysis. For disidentification, in addition to the initial theme of anger and betrayal, I found a theme of implicit or explicit accusations against the organization of complicity in racism. Under the identification type of ambivalent identification, I found themes of people expressing disappointment, but indicating continued support. Finally, for deidentification, I discovered unemotional critiques of Shea Moisture's business decision, and the use of humor without taking a clear side. Finally, under identification, I found tweets that critiqued others for taking issue with the online video, and tweets where people offered to take others' products or indicated their eagerness to take advantage of the discounts that might have followed the crisis. The identification types and themes used to code them in the analysis are outlined in the table below, and again, with examples, in the appendix. Themes derived from extant literature are marked with an asterisk.

Table 1. Coding

Identification Type	Theme
Identification	· Identification by antithesis* · Common Ground* · Transcendent "we"* · Unifying symbols* · Defending organization · "I'll take it"
Deidentification	· Neutral statements of fact · Neutral humor · Confusion · Bad business decision
Ambivalent Identification	· Doubt · Anger at, but compassion toward organization* · Disappointment, but indication of continued use
Disidentification	· Anger · Betrayal · Abandonment · Withdrawing support · Implicit and explicit accusation of complicity in racism

4.3 Procedure

I analyzed 394 tweets in total from April 24, 2017-April 25, 2017. I analyzed each tweet and placed it into the appropriate category, both in terms of identification theme (betrayal, etc) and type (identification, etc). I created new categories as necessary. After categorizing the tweets, I attempted to answer RQ1, exploring the types for identifications present, based on knowledge about the socio-political context for the crisis. In the sections below, a sample of tweets have been

selected to exemplify the identifications present within the tweets analyzed. These tweets have been quoted as they appear on Twitter, with no modifications or denotations.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 394 tweets were coded. All of these tweets were from accounts of Black individuals commenting on Shea Moisture. The tweets overwhelmingly reflected disidentification with Shea Moisture, which was expected given the crisis at hand.

RQ1: What types of identifications are present in online responses to Shea Moisture's video?

5.1 Tweets By Black Women

Deidentification

Bad business decision

These tweets did not appear to be strongly motivated by emotion, but were simply questioning the wisdom, from a business perspective, of making the move that Shea Moisture did, knowing its core market. An example of a tweet under this category was one that said: "I just want #SheaMoisture to understand that everything can't be for everyone. brand consistency + customer awareness always drives funds."

Another tweeter stated "I get #SheaMoisture wanting to diversify the product line. But fam, if a core, high-spending demographic made you, develop an adjacent line." Other tweeters compared this crisis to those that had been recently faced by United Airlines and Pepsi, two other corporations that had recently faced heavy criticism from the public.

Neutral statements of fact and humor

Tweets under this category provided neutral commentary on the online video and the response of groups of people to it. Some tweets encouraged Black women to write and publish articles about the issue instead of just tweeting, whereas others simply restated that there was a crisis. Many tweeters also made jokes that did not reveal their stance on the issue and suggested that they were neutral observers. One tweet said "Shea Moisture never did anything for my hair so they've always been cancelled…" Another tweeter indicated that they had never used the hair product but were excited at the chance to "drag" or heavily criticize a corporation or individual saying, "When you've never used a Shea Moisture product in your life but you can never pass up a good dragging."

Confusion

Tweets coded under this category were from individuals who expressed confusion as to the reason why Shea Moisture would feature white women in their online video. Many tweeters were confused at the notion that white women would use Shea Moisture at all, and asked questions, some serious, some facetious to seek clarity. An example was a tweet that said "I'm sorry but since when did white people use Shea Moisture." Another tweet under this category said "I am so confused. I thought I was watching a Dove commercial. I've never seen or heard non-POC use Shea Moisture products."

Identification with Shea Moisture

Defending Shea Moisture

Whilst the preliminary analysis of 30 tweets did not yield any tweets under this category, further analysis found tweets from individuals who expressed their support from Shea Moisture, and defended what they viewed as the organization's decision to expand their core market. Some argued that Shea Moisture had never claimed to be exclusively for Black women, or that the existence of the other video with a wider range of women showed Shea Moisture's intentions. One tweeter said "Shea Moisture never claimed to be an ethnic only hair care product in the first place. All hair types is literally printed on their merch." Another user said "The Shea Moisture ads have more than one video. It's a series w/ women of all skin tones. There is a lot to be offended by, this ain't it." Yet another tweet praised Shea Moisture for maliciously trying to manipulate white women into using a product that would not work for them. Other tweeters under category offered to take the Shea Moisture products that other people were boycotting or disposing of, or said they hoped that the controversy would make Shea Moisture's products more affordable for their own use.

Common Ground

A small number of tweets coded under identification were from tweeters who emphasized common ground with Shea Moisture. One tweeter said that Black people should be happy that a Black business was attempting to get profit from a different demographic of people, while another tweeter stated that they understood that being a Black business was difficult, and Shea Moisture was insulting the intelligence of their market by communicating as though (Black people) were

not aware of this. This user said "Shea moisture was acting like we aren't informed consumers and as if we don't know how risky / difficult it is for Black owned business." Another user said "Shea Moisture does have to appeal to people with fine hair yall with kinky hair are not the only ones that use it BW have fine hair too!"

Antithesis

A user who established identification by antithesis drew attention to what they perceived Shea Moisture not to be. This user stated "White people trying to jump on the shea moisture band wagon.Okay let's cancel out y'all Pantene pro V commercials and use Grace Bol instead." By contrasting Shea Moisture with Pantene a mainstream brand, and referring to it as "y'all" (white women's) brand, this tweet established identification with Shea Moisture on the basis of what the user perceived to be its opposite.

Ambivalent Identification

Disappointed but willing to support Shea Moisture

Tweets coded under this category were from tweeters who expressed their disappointment at Shea Moisture, but also either explicitly stated that they would continue to use Shea Moisture's products for various reasons, or indicated that they understood Shea Moisture's decision to try to expand their target market. Only a handful of tweets were coded as ambivalently identified. One tweeter said that they would use Shea Moisture, but with a negative attitude, and another said they didn't have the energy to be fully angered at Shea Moisture, but requested recommendations of other hair brands to use. One tweet coded under this category was "If Shea Moisture is just

expanding... fine. If they changed ALL the formulas to accommodate finer hair textures... bye."
Another tweet was "Shea moisture is the best thing that has happened o My hair so I doubt I'll stop
using it but damn ... that advert took the piss." Finally, one tweet said "I dont have the energy to
be all the way mad at shea moisture. but feel free to dm me a new haircare brand to love. 😩"

Disidentification

Anger and Disappointment

Tweets coded under this category expressed strong feelings of displeasure with Shea
Moisture's decision. One tweeter called for Shea Moisture to reexamine its foundation and
purpose. Whilst some of the tweets made a specific argument against Shea Moisture, many were
just strongly expressing their displeasure with the video. One tweeter said Shea Moisture was
"dead" to them. One tweet coded under this category said "Expansion or erasure? There needs to
be a look at why Shea Moisture was created to begin with. What was their focus? WHO was their
focus?". Another tweet said "you know how many people i've recommended shea moisture to?!
Fuck y'all"

Betrayal and Abandonment

Tweets coded under betrayal and abandonment expressed hurt at Shea Moisture for failing
to meet an expectation, or turning its back on its core audience. Some tweeters in this stated how
many times they had recommended Shea Moisture to women in their lives, with the implicit
suggestion that Shea Moisture was not "for" them in the way they had been "for" Shea Moisture.
Many tweeters spoke about how Shea Moisture had enjoyed success as a result of support from

Black women and was now turning its back on the same demographic of people. Another tweeter said they felt "betrayed" by Shea Moisture. Abandonment was expressed by tweeters who indicated they felt "left out" by the online video or felt like Shea Moisture was acting in accordance to a trend of taking advantage of Black women, and then letting them down in favor of white women. One user said "Shea Moisture been drew a line in the sand, but now they're throwing the sand in the eyes of dark BW w/ kinky hair." Another said "Shea Moisture so typical. Court Black women and when you get the following and support, ditch the group that wa was riding tough for was riding tough for you." Finally, one user said "Here's something else tho. WW got so many options. They ain't buying Shea Moisture in droves like that. They not loyal like us either."

Disappointment

Tweets coded under disappointment were from tweeters who simply expressed that they had been let down by Shea Moisture, or surprised that Shea Moisture would release a online video like the one they did. The vast majority of the tweets analyzed fell into this category, as most individuals were simply expressing their surprise and disappointment at Shea Moisture's actions. One tweeter said "I would love to chat with @SheaMoisture about this new 'break free from hair hate' ad. I am so disappointed for so many reasons." Another user said "Seeing Shea Moisture make a campaign trying to expand their brand to white people by getting rid of their target audience is upsetting."

Withdrawing Support

Tweets coded under this category were from individuals who stated that they were withdrawing their support of Shea Moisture, or that the brand was "canceled" by them. Several tweeters said they would take this action as a way of showing the corporation their true value. Tweeters also drew parallels between Shea Moisture and another brand, Carol's Daughter, which had also tried to appeal to a wider demographic. One tweet said "Shea Moisture can cater to "other" hair types if they want but they'll be forgotten and neglected like their good sis Carol's Daughter." Another way in which people indicated that they were withdrawing support was by making suggestions of other small Black owned brands that people could purchase beauty products from instead. One tweeter stated "Instead of #SheaMoisture, see BW-owned @ixorabb for skin & hair products. I like the shimmering shea butter."

Accusation of racism, racial insensitivity or complicity in racism

Tweets coded under this category were by individuals who accused Shea Moisture of being racially insensitive or complicit in a system of discrimination against Black people or Black women. One tweeter accused Shea Moisture of putting on Blackness like a costume, or "cosplaying" Blackness, and several tweeters used the phrase "all hair matters" derived from "all lives matter" to describe the effect that the online video had. Individuals also compared Shea Moisture's action to other racial missteps by brands against Black people. Another tweeter indicated that considering the fact that Black women have been fired in the past for wearing their hair natural, it was "audacious" of Shea Moisture to post an online video like the one they did. One tweet stated "@SheaMoisture should understand that the inclusion of other women should not come from the rejection of Black woman #sheamoisturecancelled." Another user said "This Shea

Moisture Catastrophe Is Equivalent To TommyHilifiger Saying His Clothes Wasn't For Black Ppl On Oprah."

5.2 Tweets by Black Men

Although the initial intention for the study was to analyze tweets by Black women, after collecting about a third of the data, I realized that there was an important gendered component to the tweets. First, the trend of tweets that I found from Black women differed significantly from the trend of tweets that I found from Black men. Whilst only a handful of male tweeters indicated that they used Shea Moisture and were interacting with the crisis as consumers, many Black male tweeters voiced their opinions on the online video itself, as well as the reactions of Black women to the online video. Female tweeters in turn responded to the reactions of the male tweeters, making the gender dynamic a relevant element of the Black Twitter discourse surrounding the online video. Furthermore, as Shea Moisture struggled to manage the controversy and respond to its online audience, it made what many saw as a grave misstep by responding to a Black, male, online personality who various tweeters indicated had a reputation for taking positions that have been perceived as antagonistic towards Black women. In a response to a tweet by this man in which he critiqued [a predominantly female] distraught online public of attempting to boycott Shea Moisture and remaining loyal to other non-Black owned but possibly racist businesses, Shea Moisture's Twitter account posted, in part "We can't thank you enough for your loyalty and support. It's wonderful people like you that keep us going strong". Many tweeters expressed that they saw this as Shea Moisture doubling down on the position it had taken with the online video. One tweeter expressed that they had been willing to forgive the brand and move on--until they saw that response. Another female tweeter said "Damn. @SheaMoisture really just trolled the fuck out of Black women, supporting a man who makes a living pushing ahistorical hate against BW."

A less important reason that gender became a prominent part of the discourse was that around the time the online video was released, it had become news that a well-known and beloved Black actor, Jesse Williams was getting a divorce from his Black wife. A number of the tweets analyzed mentioned this, with one stating that considering the actor's news and Shea Moisture, it was a bad day for Black girls.

Unlike the tweets from women, only a minority of the tweets from men appeared to come from a place of emotional investment in the issue. In these tweets, individuals, some of which indicated that they used Shea Moisture expressed their personal disappointment. Other men came to the defense of Black women, with one user stating "Damn @SheaMoisture you can't misrepresent the everyday plight of our Women of Color". Another user said "niggas defending shea moisture: let Jordans come out with an ad featuring only white men after so many Black men have died over them shoes." Finally, one user said "Shea Moisture went NBA prospect and left their day 1 for a white girl," likening the online video to a young Black man replacing his longtime romantic partner with a white woman.

A majority of the tweets, even when they did critique Shea Moisture, took a significantly lighter approach to the issue than the tweets from women. Many users made jokes about the online video and the controversy surrounding it. One user said "Shea Moisture commercial got ya this upset? Thought #yall were unbothered?" Other users criticized the outrage that was being directed at the online video. One such tweet said "You Nappy Heads Need to Calm Down about #sheamoisture Its Called Diversity!" Yet another user said "Shea moisture use a sticker on they bottles but I don't see y'all boycotting stickers lol y'all feminist funny." Finally, there were a number of tweets that defended Shea Moisture, asking them not to take the outrage seriously, and

dismissing the concerns being expressed. One user said "A message to Shea Moisture executives, please don't apologize everyone is fake mad for today and will forget tomorrow."

5.3 Analysis

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the nature of Black women's identification with Shea Moisture in order to understand their general response to the controversial 2017 online video. Recent events, including the Pepsi commercial featuring Kendall Jenner released April 4, 2017 reveal that corporations and their communications are situated within complex social contexts. Thus, it is important that organizations understand the identifications and identities of their publics as they are shaped by the forces of power in a given socio-political context.

Shea Moisture released an online video that was ostensibly for the purpose of uplifting all women and inspiring them to celebrate their natural hair textures. However, the responses that this online video provoked showed that Shea Moisture failed to reach its goal. Although there were tweets that showed identification with Shea Moisture, the vast majority of tweeters appeared to be disidentified with the corporation. The analysis of identification in the responses to the online video showed that:

i)   Shea Moisture's publics had a shared identity and were identified with one another

ii)   Shea Moisture was construed by its publics to be a Black business

iii)   Shea's Moisture's racialized identity formed the basis of its consumers' identification with it, making it a "protected" identification.

Identification and Identity Amongst Black Users

First, the setting of this crisis made identification and identity very apparent. The vast majority of tweets about the online video were from Black users, placing the issue centrally within the "Black Twitter" community. Outside of the identifications that were communicated surrounding the organization, Black users constructed their racial identity and their identification with the other Black users through various rhetorical means.

One of these was the pool of cultural artifacts and references that the users evoked. These cultural symbols do not have a static or objective meaning to all groups of people, but when tweeters used them there was an assumption that the audience was not only familiar with the symbols but that they also shared the same interpretation of what the symbols represented. For example, one user who made reference to "Becky" a word that might refer to a white women unaware of her privilege (Words We're Watching: 'Becky', n.d.) did so knowing that their audience would understand what was being communicated with that term. Two users who each proposed that Rachel Dolezal or Kendall Jenner would be the new ambassador and spokesperson respectively for Shea Moisture did so with the assumption that their audience had the same basic understanding of what Dolezal and Jenner represent, and would thus find the idea to be absurd.

Furthermore, pronouns like "we" and "us" were ubiquitous in the tweets analyzed, and served to reveal the group identification of the users. Cheney (1983) stated that the use of the transcendent "we" indicated identification with a collective. An example was one tweet that said, "So #SheaMoisture basically just hit us with the #ALLHairMatters." Another tweet said, "So y'all saw this and thought you were... supporting our community? I don't understand." The use of these pronouns in both examples, and the explicit reference in the second tweet to "our community"

(words also used in Shea Moisture's response), showed that these users viewed themselves as members of a community and saw Shea Moisture's actions as being directed *to* that community.

Even in the absence of collective pronouns, the underlying idea that the user's audience shared the same ultimate goal of advancing the welfare of Black people was often present, particularly for identified tweets. One user said in part "...y'all should want Black businesses to get this white coin as well." In a response like this one, despite the absence of the transcendent "we" or a similar pronoun, it is evident that the assumed audience is other Black people, and the user is urging them to show solidarity with a Black business. Furthermore, this shows that identification with one another was somehow informing identification with Shea Moisture as well.

When users mentioned non-Black people, they generally spoke *about* them, instead of *to* them. An example was a user that said 'Shea Moisture centered white women in a Black woman space and that is so hurtful. Yall not getting my coins. Them white women can have yall.' One user who did refer directly to white people commenting on the controversy said, "White people trying to jump on the shea moisture band wagon.Okay let's cancel out y'all Pantene pro V online videos and use Grace Bol instead," once again suggesting that the controversy concerning Shea Moisture's video was one that primarily concerned the Black community, and any action was for Black people to take.

Additionally, tweets coded as deidentified, which did not contain strong rhetorical indicators of identification with Shea Moisture, contained indicators of identification with other Black users. One such tweet said "Are we saying that Black-owned companies like @SheaMoisture must only target Black customers in their ads? Please share your thoughts," whilst another said "I'm normally down for the cause but there's bigger issues then freakin Shea

Moisture." Whilst neither of these tweets showed identification with Shea Moisture, they signify identification with a community of Black users with assumed shared goals.

The identification of users with one another in the responses makes it evident that they share a collective identity as Black people, one that invariably informed their identification with Shea Moisture. The references to the oppression that Black women face in society also shows an awareness of inequities in society, one that would also play a role in the way that the online video was being understood.

Identifications with Shea Moisture and Shea Moisture's Co-Constructed Identity

The identified tweets that constituted a minority of total tweets expressed identification by common ground, by antithesis, and by reiteration of their support for Shea Moisture. A handful of tweeters pointed out that the video had been released as part of a series which included other videos that did feature Black women. Twitter users who reiterated their support of Shea Moisture humorously offered to take the products others were talking about disposing of, or indicated their interest in taking advantage of the discounts that might follow a crisis like this.

Tweeters defending Shea Moisture also established identification through common ground by underscoring the wide variety of hair textures within the Black community, including "fine" hair, and in one case, empathizing with the corporation as a Black business that faces unique levels of "risk." This user stated, "Shea moisture was acting like we aren't informed consumers and as if we don't know how risky / difficult it is for Black owned business." Another user expressed their identification through antithesis, by talking about the "white coin" that Shea Moisture would benefit from. Yet another suggested that the online video was an intentional effort by Shea

Moisture to mislead the perceived targeted audience. These tweeters communicated their identification with Shea Moisture by emphasizing ways in which it was still with or for "us". Finally, some tweets pointed to Shea Moisture's communicated identity, stating to the online audience that Shea Moisture had always said it was for *all* hair types and had even printed that on their merchandise. However, the absence of more examples of this type of communication and the presence of examples that signified the contrary from Shea Moisture seemed to be what drove most of the disidentified tweets.

These (disidentified) tweets revealed the tensions surrounding Shea Moisture's identity by drawing attention to the dissonance that existed between their construal of the organization's identity versus its new communicated identity. In their expression of disidentification, Shea Moisture's consumers made it evident that they had understood Shea Moisture to be a Black business. In tweets, individuals specifically asked for and accepted suggestions of other **Black-owned** businesses that catered to natural hair. One user said "Newsflash : Shea moisture isn't the only Black owned natural hair line . That's the beauty in choices." This tweet and others like it display less of a focus on Shea Moisture's products and or alternative products for Black hair, instead focusing on the racial identity of the owners. This shows that the racial affiliations played an important role in individuals' identification with Shea Moisture. Another user expressed that Shea Moisture's products were not effective or affordable enough for it to make mistakes, likewise suggesting that at least a segment of the corporation's publics patronized the business for reasons other than the effectiveness or cost-efficiency of their products. This suggests that before this crisis, these consumers were identified with Shea Moisture on the basis of its perceived racial identity.

The racialization of Shea Moisture's identity as a business was also made evident as individuals made reference to racial groups' wealth ownership. Some users saw the online video, and possible expansion on the part of Shea Moisture, as a way for it, as a Black business, to gain additional wealth. Such tweets were apparently informed by the racial wealth disparities that constitute an important aspect of the socio-political context of the crisis. Others saw "cancelling" Shea Moisture as a means to display the power of the Black consumer. One tweeter said "SheaMoisture said to Black women that have been supporting them just to appeal to Beckys. They gon learn the value of Black buying power." Another tweeter said, "Since @SheaMoisture has a new target demo which natural hair product company wants these community dollars? #sheamoisture #alternatives." These references to "community dollars" and "Black buying power" show that Black consumers' support of Shea Moisture (or any alternative it might be replaced with) was construed as a collective, communal endeavor. This not only underscores the identification that these individuals have with the Black community, but also suggests that their identification with Shea Moisture was related to its identity as a Black business.

Further support of identification with Shea Moisture on the basis of its racial identity was supported by the abundance of tweets that expressed neither anger not betrayal, but rather, confusion at the notion of non-Black people using Shea Moisture. Many said they had never seen or even heard about women who were not Black using the product. The absurdity of this idea led to people making a lot of jokes about running into white women in the "ethnic" aisle.

The ethnic aisle itself was pulled into the discourse as symbolic, a piece of evidence of what Shea Moisture was. This was ironic, as several months before, Shea Moisture released a purportedly uplifting online video about leaving the ethnic aisle and going into the beauty aisle, "where we all belong." Some tweeters called attention to the irony of Shea Moisture still remaining

in the ethnic aisle despite all the effort it used in releasing the controversial online video. Other tweeters called attention to the demographic on YouTube product reviews of Shea Moisture, as well as an alleged claim by Shea Moisture that it "revolutionized" natural hair. One tweeter implied that the corporation was departing from the founder's grandmother's--often referenced in their origin story--vision. Another tweeter said they were waiting for Shea Moisture to release another online video of a white woman using one of the culturally specific products created by the corporation. Many references were also made to Rachel Dolezal, a white woman who became famous when it was revealed that she had claimed to be African American for decades, suggesting that the white women in the online video or the idea of white women using Shea Moisture was at the least, reminiscent of cultural appropriation. This and similar examples show that whether Shea Moisture realized it or not, consumers were identified with them on the basis of their identity--explicitly communicated or not--as a Black business.

Furthermore, the role that the socio-political climate Black women inhabit had in informing their response is clear in the way they expressed disidentification with the corporation. Two characteristics of this context which shape individuals' experiences are outlined below:

i.   The erasure of the Black experience and the invalidation of struggles specific to
        Black people
The erasure of Blackness and Black womanhood is something that is rampant within the socio-political context in which Shea Moisture operates and thus, informed individuals' identification with Shea Moisture. Some words that came up in the expressions of disappointment with Shea Moisture were "fiction," "whitewash," "sell out," "gentrify," and "erasure." The last word, erasure, encapsulates the way many tweeters construed the

online video. One tweeter stated that the problem she had with the online video was not that there were white women, but that there were no Black women with thicker hair. Shea Moisture's ad seemed to replicate trends that occur all too often in society, people exploiting Black women, the Black woman being left by her partner, and Black womanhood being erased and replaced

The invalidation of struggles specific to Black people is another aspect of the socio-political context that informed individuals' identification with Shea Moisture. Various examples from the data analyzed further show the importance of the racial climate in the U.S. to the way this crisis played out. References to Pepsi, Rachel Dolezal, and referring to the online video as an "all *hair* matters" affair all show the ways in which current events and the tense dynamics of racial relations offline informed people's responses to the online video. "All hair matters" plays off of "all lives matter," an infamous phrase used by individuals to invalidate the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement to fight police brutality against Black people. Pepsi, a few weeks before Shea Moisture, released its own commercial that received backlash for trivializing BLM by showing Kendall Jenner, a white model, creating camaraderie between police and protesters by handing an officer a can of Pepsi. These references all exemplify and characterize the fraught socio-political context in which the crisis occurred. They also provide insight into the reasons why this seemingly innocuous online video where women talked about "hair hate" was perceived as a gross trivialization of the struggles that Black people, particular Black women, face.

ii.   The dual dimensions of oppression faced by Black women

The differences in the trend of the tweets from men and women underscores the fact that Shea Moisture's main consumers have intersectional identities as Black and female, which inform their identification to Shea Moisture. Although the online video might have been intended to uplift women, Shea Moisture failed to realize that its core audience was not just female but also Black, impacted by dual dimensions of oppression as a result of both their race and their gender. The initial video itself, as well as Black people's responses to it, also show that Shea Moisture did not have an understanding of the racialized identification that Black women had with it, or with the expectations of its own identity that came with that identification. Examples of this exist both with Shea Moisture referring in its apology to Black women as "WOC" or women of color, a term that can diminish the differences in the experiences that the women encapsulated in this category face. A number of tweeters took exception to this term, asking who exactly "WOC" was referring to.

Another trend in the tweets that brought to light the differences in the experiences faced by Black women and Black men were from tweeters who criticized Shea Moisture's response to an influential Black male tweeter apparently known for expressing hostility toward Black women online. Shea Moisture's response to this individual, in which they thanked him for his loyalty to corporation, significantly impacted the discourse and increased the sense of dissatisfaction toward Shea Moisture. Many women explicitly stated that they had been willing to forgive Shea Moisture until they saw that response. Many people saw this as Shea Moisture taking an intentional stance in opposition to Black women.

Marketing scholars have used the term "sensitive groups" to refer to "a segment of the population generally perceived as being disadvantaged, vulnerable, discriminated against, or

involved in social issues which consequently influence their consumer behavior" (Macchiette & Roy, 1994, p.58). According to Macchiette and Roy (1994), the degree of sensitivity is not static but relies on "media attention generated from consumer advocates, regulatory agencies, support groups, and the public at large" (p. 58). Macchiette and Roy (1994) also posited that consumers may belong to various sensitive groups at the same time, and all consumers at some point will likely belong to a sensitive group. This umbrella term does not make a clear distinction between naturally occurring or inevitable sensitivity such as the one that might result from old age, and sensitivity that might result from oppression as a result of one's identity. The term "sensitive" also implies that this condition is inherent to a group. In actuality, some of the "sensitive" groups Macchiette and Roy (1994) mentioned only exhibit characteristics of sensitivity as a result of the legacy of their systemic oppression in an unequal society. Thus, I would like to propose extending or amending that term to "*sensitized"* as a description for groups who, as a result of the societal oppression they have endured, become justifiably apprehensive in their communication and identification with organizations.

My analysis of the tweets suggests that Shea Moisture's core consumers, a sensitized public, felt a unique identification with the organization that was informed by the position of marginality Black people occupy in the United States. Baron and Spranca (1997) used the term "protected values" to describe values that are resistant to trade-offs inherent to the process of rational decision making, for example, the belief by some that human lives and rights are infinitely more important than economic goods. According to these scholars, although people might be forced act in ways that are contrary to these values, they are unhappy and unwilling to do so. The term "protected" refers to the reluctance of individuals to trade-off these values, which arise from deontological "rules" (Baron & Spranca, 1997). I would like to apply this interpretation of the

word "protected" to the realm of identities and identification to propose that identification with an organization, when it occurs on the basis of a marginalized identity such as Blackness, will be a "protected" identification. In the 2017 Shea Moisture crisis, consumers reacted in a way that many outside observers might have misunderstood at what was ostensibly an innocuous online video from Shea Moisture. Seeing the identification these consumers felt as a "protected" identification brings to light the unique set of expectations consumers might have had of Shea Moisture's behavior.

The identifications present within the responses analyzed were informed by both the core public's racial and gender identities as well as the perceived identity of Shea Moisture. The current study supports Cheney's (1983) definition of identity as both what is taken and what is mistaken to be representative of an entity. Regardless of whether or not Shea Moisture wanted to be viewed as one, Shea Moisture was a Black business because it was perceived to be a Black business.

Shea Moisture's online video constituted the violation of what may be described as an unspoken expectation between Black consumers and a Black business to support each other's interests in a society that marginalizes Blackness. This video was more than *just* a video because for many Black women, their hair is more than *just* hair. Instead, the dominance of a Eurocentric ideal of beauty makes hair--particularly natural hair--an important aspect of Black women's self-presentation.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6. 1 Overall Conclusions

Shea Moisture's 2017 crisis presented an interesting opportunity to examine the identification of Black women with a Black-owned business that had catered to them when an online campaign video suggested that it was trying to expand its market. The analysis of identifications in the tweets from women and men in response to this video revealed the following:

i) Shea Moisture's Black consumer public identified with one another and with the brand

The shared identity of Shea Moisture's public was made evident by the manner in which Black users communicated with one another. Individuals made use of collective pronouns like "we" and "us" and also used explicit identifiers like "our community." This revealed the underlying identifications that they had with one another. Additionally, their use of cultural references made it apparent that they saw other Black users as their audience and were identified as members of a collective. Users also showed a range of identification, disidentification, and ambivalent identification with Shea Moisture. Whilst a number of users displayed identification by indicating continued support for Shea Moisture, defending the organization and establishing their identification through antithesis, many users displayed disidentification through their expressions of betrayal, anger and disappointment. Other users were ambivalently identified, critiquing yet supporting Shea Moisture, and the rest of the users were deidentified, providing no evidence of identification with Shea Moisture. The presence of identifications in the tweets made evident the extent to which individuals perceived themselves as similar to or different from Shea Moisture. It also showed that individuals had expectations of Shea Moisture and that (in many cases) those expectations had been violated. The manner in which the identifications were

communicated also brought to light the basis of individuals' identification with Shea Moisture and the importance of the socio-political context in which the crisis occurred.

ii)   Shea Moisture's identity was racialized as it was construed by its core public to be a Black business.

The responses to Shea Moisture's video made it apparent that individuals had a different conception of Shea Moisture's identity than the one the organization seemed to have. One common theme across all of the identification categories discovered in the tweets analyzed was that users had perceived Shea Moisture to be a business that caters at least primarily to Black people. Users who were disidentified indicated this by asking for suggestions of other specifically Black-owned natural hair businesses to patronize. This action suggested that people supported Shea Moisture, not only because of the value of its products, but also because it was a Black business. Identified users urged people to support Shea Moisture based on this racialized identity. Many deidentified individuals expressed confusion at the idea of individuals who are not Black or people of color using Shea Moisture products. This idea seemed so absurd that it became the center of many jokes that were made about the ongoing crisis.

iii)   This perceived identity formed the basis for Shea Moisture's consumer public's "protected" identifications with the organization.

The term "protected" was applied to values by Baron and Spranca (1997) to describe values that are resistant to the tradeoffs inherent to rational decision making. I apply protected to the realm of identifications to argue that identifications on the basis of a marginalized identity like race will come with a unique set of motivations that will inform individuals' actions and reactions to an

organizational collective. In the current case, individuals were not only identified with Shea Moisture because of its identity as a Black business but also because of its association with the natural hair movement which developed out of resistance against the dominant beauty standard. The intersection of Blackness and femininity (in conjunction with the politics inherent to natural hair) were the basis for a protected identification due to the discrimination that individuals experience as a result of their embodiment of or association with these qualities. As a result of this, Black women's identification with Shea Moisture came with a unique set of expectations that made a seemingly innocuous online video a profound transgression to many members of Shea's consumer public.

The findings of this study suggest that an organization's publics will have "protected" identifications if the following criteria are fulfilled:

1. The organization has a core public with a shared identity with one another

2. That identity is marginalized in the context within which the organization operates

3. That identity forms the basis of the core public's identification

Some organizations that might fulfill all three of this criteria are Latino-run media company mitú, Gallaudet University for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and podcast Not Your African Cliché.

6.2 Practical Implications

The three main findings of this study underscore the importance of communication and an organization's publics in the creation of its identity. Whilst Shea Moisture might have construed itself as an organization that catered to *all*, its audience was identified with it on the racial dimension of its identity as a "Black-owned" business that catered largely to Black women with natural hair. As a result of the societal oppression that Black people face in the United States, as well as the beauty-specific discrimination that Black women with natural hair experience, identification with Shea Moisture on these bases led to a unique set of motivations and expectations from its consumer public. The marginalization of Blackness in the United States, specifically as it concerns African American women with natural hair, makes this identification a *protected* identification, an identification grounded in a set of rules that result in unique expectations of Shea Moisture's behavior. A primary expectation of this identification was that of a mutual relationship in which consumers' support of the business is informed by its Blackness, and the business, in turn, honors Black people and is interested in their welfare. The perception of the violation of this expectation was what informed the 2017 crisis. Practical implications of the findings of this study are outlined below:

1. Identity and identification are central to the relationships that publics form with organizations. In the contemporary world, the sustained fulfillment of organizational goals is precarious without an understanding that first, publics both inside and outside of an organization are empowered to co-construct the organization's identity, and second, that the identifications formed by publics are central to their support or opposition to an organization. Shea Moisture's case illustrates that publics will co-construct an organization's identity, with or without its permission.

2. This study suggests that Shea Moisture, and other organizations like it with protected identifications, can only extend their identities successfully by first becoming aware of their perceived identity and the bases of their audience's identification. Organizations with publics with protected identifications might include organizations who cater mainly or exclusively to people with disabilities, racial minorities, or people who are marginalized on the basis of another dimension of their identity. For these organizations and others, all marketing and communication with the aim of extending organizational identity should be developed and disseminated with a consciousness of their existing co-constructed identity, the shared identity of their core public, and the basis of their core public's identification. In Shea Moisture's case, some of the tweets suggested that the principally problematic element of the video was not that it included women of another race, but that it seemed to replace its core audience with them.

3. Furthermore, organizations like Shea Moisture should refrain from universalizing the struggles of their marginalized publics. They should try not to appropriate the language or imagery of their marginalized public by applying them to a different group that faces distinctly different problems. Shea Moisture's online video might have been better received if the women in it were not speaking about the struggles they had faced coming to love their own hair and the "hair hate" they had experienced in society. Knowing that at the heart of the natural hair movement is a push for Black women to love their hair and embrace it *despite* discrimination, the video came across as a trivialization and whitewashing of the deep-rooted struggles Black women face with their hair.

4. Finally, in the current digital scape it is imperative that all organizations view each unit of communication in the same decontextualized manner their audience might. The

controversial video from Shea Moisture was ultimately a part of a more representative series of videos that did feature other black women with a variety of hair textures in their #EverybodyGetsLove campaign. However, this singular video gained a disproportionate amount of attention, and many people did not realize or care about the existence of other videos in the series. In retrospect, it is clear now that Shea Moisture should never have released any one video that failed to represent its core audience. It should be assumed that the audience have no context for any piece of communication. Commercials, tweets and online videos should therefore, as much as possible, be cohesive units that pass across a complete message.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study suggest that identity and identification with an organization, particularly when "protected," can play a pivotal role in an organization's relationship with its publics. Examining organizational identity and identification in the context of a crisis, this study makes a theoretical contribution to extant organizational communication scholarship by analyzing the identification of publics outside of an organization, and considering the role that socio-political context plays in publics' identification.

Firstly, this study on Shea Moisture's crisis examines organizational identity and identification in the context of "outside" publics. Organizational communication scholars have studied identification and identity as it concerns the relationship of publics within an organization to the organizational collective (e.g. Ashforth & Kreiner (1999), Pratt (2000), Williams & Connaughton (2012)). These scholars took an approach to identity and identification that focused centrally on the publics within an organization, exploring the ways in which identification impacts their actions and motivations. The current study makes a contribution by focusing instead on publics outside the organization, examining both their identifications and

their co-construction of the organization's identity. This study thus adopts a broader conceptualization of organizational identity to include the outward-facing elements of an organization's "brand," joining other scholars like Hatch and Schultz (1997) to support the argument for the erosion of the boundary between an organization's "inward" and "outward" identity.

Furthermore, this study introduces the concept of "protected identifications" to describe the ways in which identification with an organization may not only be shaped or informed by the forces of the socio-political context in which the organization operates, but may play a defining role. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) studied the way that the stigmatization of "dirty work" in society impacted the identification of people involved in those lines of work and the strategies such individuals used to cope. This study takes a similar approach to understanding the way that the marginalization that Black women experience impacted their identification to an organization that catered primarily to them. Instead of the nature of work, this study looks at the way that non-voluntary aspects of an organization's publics' shared identity, such as race, can impact identification. I then propose that identification on the basis of such marginalized identities will be associated with a unique set of rules and motivations and actions on the part of the consumer, making this identification "protected" and increasing the likelihood that publics might experience disidentification when they perceive their expectations to be violated. This study thus extends the landmark concept of organizational identification that has been explored by various scholars including Cheney (1983) and Cheney and Tompkins (1987) to take into account the very real inequalities in society that shape individuals' identification.

Additionally, this study makes another contribution by using tweets as a unit of analysis for organizational identification. This was a novel approach for gaining insight into organizational identity and identification, allowing for the discovery of new themes to fit into the established identification "types." The potential for dynamic dialogue created by Twitter makes it a promising site for future studies on identity and identification. However, one limitation of using tweets as this study does is that it does restrict the depth of insight it was possible to gain

into users' identification. There was also no clear way to gain insight into the nature of identification that existed before the crisis occurred; I made assumptions based on the tweets only after the controversial video was created. Additionally, not every tweet analyzed passed across a cohesive message that fit "neatly" into a theme, creating an amount of ambiguity in some of the tweets analyzed.

Future studies can, using a variety of methodological approaches, continue to explore the concept of protected identifications, particularly as they relate to other marginalized dimensions of identity like gender and ability. It would be particularly useful to conduct interviews in cases similar to the current study in order to gain deeper insight into the identification of individuals with organizational collectives.

6.4 Crisis Aftermath

The 2017 Shea Moisture crisis provided an opportunity to the identification of publics who are marginalized to an organization that catered primarily to them. From a cursory observation of the responses to Shea Moisture's online video, it was evident that many individuals had complex and emotional reactions. The Shea Moisture case ultimately makes it clear that identity shapes the way that people experience the world and the identifications they make as they do so. It both impacts how people respond as well as how they are responded to. In the modern world, organizations do not have the luxury of ignoring the complex socio-political realities creating conditions of inequity that make it so that all publics, though equal, are not perceived as such in society. Burke (1950) posited that identification occurs on the basis of similarity. Thus, the importance of oneself being seen, being represented, and being reflected by an organization with which one is identified cannot be overstated. The video released by Shea Moisture was not "just" a video to many Black women because, Black women's hair is not "just" hair. Thus, the identification of many Black women to Shea Moisture, I propose, is not just any identification, but a *protected* identification with a unique set of expectations and

stating, "We are excited to be able to return this culturally relevant and historically significant platform to ownership by the people and the consumers whom it serves, and offer new opportunities for the women leading the business to also be partners in the business" (Simon, 2018). In March 2018, it was again announced that Miss Jamaica, Davina Bennet, who won second place in Miss Universe the year before, would be the face of Shea Moisture's Jamaican Black Castor Oil products (Hudson, 2018). These actions taken by Sundial Brands and Shea Moisture's founder suggest a renewed understanding from the organization of the relevance of their core consumers' identification. Sundial Brands and Dennis have both explicitly and implicitly restated their commitment to the Black community, although they have not communicated an intention to exclusively serve Black consumers.

In the future, organizations should strive to understand their publics' construal of their identities, the identifications they form with them, and the ways that both are affected by the power dynamics of the sociopolitical context in which the organization operates.

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APPENDIX

Coding with examples

Identification Type	Theme	Example
Identification	· Identification by antithesis · Common Ground · Transcendent "we" · Unifying symbols · Defending Shea Moisture · "I'll take it"	· Shea Moisture got like 100 different lines of products for everybody y'all been sleep they're a business what you expect?!
Deidentification	· Neutral statements of fact · Neutral humor · Confusion · Bad business decision	·I am so confused. I thought I was watching a Dove commercial. I've never seen or heard non-POC use Shea Moisture products
Ambivalent Identification	· Doubt · Anger at, but compassion toward Shea Moisture · Disappointment, but indication of continued use	·If Shea Moisture is just expanding... fine. If they changed ALL the formulas to accommodate finer hair textures... bye.

Disidentification	· Anger · Betrayal · Abandonment · Withdrawing support · Implicit and explicit accusation of complicity in racism	· How do you not even acknowledge the vast majority of your LOYAL customers (thick kinky curly community)? @SheaMoisture ·