

The Role of Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism during the 2018-2024 US Election

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS



**UNIVERSITAS
ISLAM
INDONESIA**

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FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA**

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Proposed to the Department of International Relations
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences
Universitas Islam Indonesia
As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn
Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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Defended in front of Board of Examiners
in the Department of International Relations
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences
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No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

May 6, 2024,



Risha Haiqa Rahmawati

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ABSTRACT

Famous celebrities, especially musicians, are in a position to not only focus on what they are doing creatively. Famous celebrities or musicians such as Taylor Swift are also able to voice their concerns on other issues such as politics which then makes their actions known as celebrity activism. Celebrity activism has the power to move other people or groups of society in the same direction as the celebrity. Taylor Swift's celebrity activism was driven by several factors, both internal and external. Taylor Swift carries out her celebrity activism only with legitimate causes and her actions produce real results and impacts. The impact has proven successful even though, there are impacts that she also failed to achieve. However, the general impact of Taylor Swift's celebrity activism has proven that celebrities, or more precisely musicians, are also able to take part in the world of politics even though they are not government actors.

Keywords: Taylor Swift, Celebrity Activism, Politics, Election, Vote, the United States.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In International Relations, many aspects are studied, one of which is Social Movements. A social movement is an activity that is usually carried out by an informal group in the form of an organization or a large number of individuals who specifically focus on a social or political issue by carrying out, rejecting, or campaigning for the value of a social change. There are social movements that are carried out regularly and there are also types of social movements whose activities are only carried out in limited cases because those involved participate actively when the certain activities have broad implications for society. Thus, social movements are movements carried out by a number of people who are organized in nature with the aim of changing or maintaining certain elements in the wider community (Cohen 1983).

The discussion of social movements flows into the next topic, namely activism. Activism is an activity that aims to create a change in society, government power, social order, or the environment. Activism is associated with engagement in political activities by individuals, groups, and communities that share common intentions or goals (Ekman and Amnå 2012). Types of activism itself are actually quite diverse, such as writing letters to newspaper agencies or politicians and or campaigning for government power. Activism can also be carried out by holding demonstrations, street marches, strikes or hunger strikes. Those who carry out

activism are called activists. They have a tendency to try to persuade people directly rather than asking the government directly for change.

In this modern era, technology is increasingly becoming a means of facilitating relationships between people, activities and so on. Because of this, the types of activism activities are also expanding, especially in the digital realm. This is evident in the modern term of digital activism or cyber activism which is a form of activism that uses the Internet and digital media as the main platform for mass mobilization and political action. Digital activism has proven to be an effective means of providing new ways to involve protesters, because social media also feels safer than public spaces where expressing aspirations is likely to be more dangerous. Digital activism is considered a form of social activism activity mediated by the use of technology to promote social movements (Hartanto 2022). The example of activism in this research is the activities carried out by Taylor Swift in influence an increase in the number of young voters in the United States.

Taylor Alison Swift, commonly known as Taylor Swift, is a pop and country music singer-songwriter from America. Taylor Swift's career began when she was very young. Her first album was released in 2006. Since then, her career has grown rapidly. Almost all the songs that she has composed and sung have gained fame and are well-known by many people. During her career in the music industry, she has received many awards for her music. Taylor Swift writes a lot of songs with messages about love, and is best known for creating songs from stories of her broken heart. But she did not stop at just love songs. She has also dared to write protest songs against the situation in her country, such as her song entitled "Miss

Americana & the Heartbreak Prince". This song she wrote as a result of her disappointment with politics in the United States. Taylor Swift has provided notes regarding the meaning and inspiration for the song through Spotify's Love, Taylor: Lover Enhanced Album, "This song is about disillusionment with our crazy world of politics and inequality, set in a metaphorical high school".

In addition, on October 8 2018, Taylor Swift posted on her personal social media, namely Instagram, that she openly endorsed two Democratic congressional candidates in Tennessee namely Jim Cooper for re-election to the House of Representatives, and former Tennessee governor Phil Bredesen for the Senate. She told young people not to miss their chance to vote in the election. She openly stated, "I will be voting for Phil Bredesen for Senate and Jim Cooper for House of Representatives. Please, please educate yourself on the candidates running in your state and vote based on who most closely represents your values. For a lot of us, we may never find a candidate or party with whom we agree 100% on every issue, but we have to vote anyway. So many intelligent, thoughtful, self-possessed people have turned 18 in the past two years and now have the right and privilege to make their vote count. But first you need to register, which is quick and easy to do."

She also criticized the Republican Marsha Blackburn, who Swift says is opposed to a few things that Swift supports, such as women's equality, protections against violence against women and LGBT rights. Her Instagram post had a significant positive impact on the number of voters in the United States. A non-profit, nonpartisan voting registration and technology platform in America, Vote.org, stated that they reached 65,000 registrations in a single 24-hour period

after Taylor Swift's posts and the site has also experienced a huge jump in visitor numbers since the posts. There were 155,940 unique visitors within the 24 hours (Guthrie 2018).

However, the election resulted in Marsha Blackburn becoming the first female senator from Tennessee. This disappointment ultimately underlied the creation of the song "Only the Young" on January 31, 2020. In the song, Taylor Swift pours her heart out about wanting the youth to stick around for better change. She felt disappointed because many people, especially young people, had done everything they could and tried very hard. The hopes of the young people had been squashed and that made her sad, because, according to her, young people are the people who will be most affected by poor decisions that are likely to happen now and in the future. Because of this outcome, Taylor Swift wants more young people to be active and vote in elections to save the United States from corrupt officials and has the big hope that the United States can have a much better future with the help of young people.

Taylor Swift was chosen in this research because she is an influential figure. Her career as a singer and songwriter makes her well-known to many people and of great influence. According to Blank, who wrote the following in a Forbes article, Taylor Swift is influential for several reasons. Among these reasons is that she has strong support, both from fellow musicians and from her fans. Her power doesn't come from her alone but includes her followers on social media who strengthen her voice. Taylor Swift has a large number of followers. Her total followers from all her social media accounts reached 526.9 million followers and was ranked 4th out

of the 5 most followed people on social media. Meanwhile, her Instagram account alone has 284 million followers as of May 2024 making her the 14th most followed person on Instagram (Duarte 2024).

Taylor Swift is not afraid to raise her voice, which is important when wanting change. Another reason for the power of her influence is that she is never afraid to express her feelings to the public. All these reasons have certainly made Taylor Swift influential and able to be recognized as a Global Activist. Since she is a celebrity that is very famous, the many acts of activism she carries out are considered examples of Celebrity Activism. The concept of Celebrity Activism here refers to the journal article entitled *Celebrity Activism in International Relations: In Search of a Framework for Analysis*, which was written by Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis. This journal article discusses the meaning of Celebrity Activism, its enabling factors, and the case studies. An act of activism can be said to be Celebrity Activism when the celebrity is able to increase public awareness, mobilize resources, and influence political decisions (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). Celebrity Activism has been happening since the 1960s when famous singers, such as Bob Dylan, Neil Young and John Lennon, made protest songs fashionable. However, the reason it is important to discuss Celebrity Activism by Taylor Swift is because she has many fans from various backgrounds and age groups. The songs she wrote are considered relatable by many people, making her a role model. She is an example of someone who sticks to her values and shows her fans that they can achieve whatever their goals are. This makes her an inspiration for many young people (Pazzanese 2023). Therefore, this research will discuss celebrity activism carried out by Taylor Swift.

1.2 Research Question

How was Taylor Swift's activism considered as a Celebrity Activism in International Relations during the United States' 2018-2024 election?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine the impact of Taylor Swift's activism on the United States Election.
2. To understand how a non-political actor can influence the world of politics, specifically in terms of an election.

1.4 Research Scope

The scope of this research will be limited to topics surrounding social movements, specifically activism carried out by individuals. The actor with the important role in this research is Taylor Swift because of her fame was able to influence people's voices. The time setting of this research is during 2018 until 2024 US Election. At that time, a large number of young people had been choosing to abstain from voting which was an issue that needed to be discussed.

Through this research, it is hoped that a better understanding of the impact of Taylor Swift's activism on the United States Elections can be obtained as well as knowledge of how a non-political actor can influence the world of politics, specifically in terms of an election.

1.5 Literature Review

In this research, several journal articles were used as references. These articles discuss topics related to this research but differ in terms of content and discussion. The first journal article is entitled *Celebrity Activism in International Relations: In Search of a Framework for Analysis*, which was written by Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis. This journal article's discussion is most similar to this present research. This journal article mainly discusses Celebrity Activism, its enabling factors, and the case studies. The reason it was chosen as a reference is because this article was written based on case studies about celebrities that have become global activists and how their involvement in politics and actions have been considered as Celebrity Activism. The difference between that journal article and this research is that Huliaras and Tzifakis focus their discussion only on the main theory, whereas in this research, examples of enabling factors and theories are discussed in accordance with the activism of Taylor Swift.

This research also has similarities with the journal article entitled *Understanding Social Movements from the Perspective of Social Science* written by Andi Haris, Asyraf Bin Hj. AB Rahman and Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad. This article explains what a social movement is in general and how an activity can be called a social movement. It provides examples of the nature of social movements themselves and explains how social movements have their own types, such as repressive movements, regressive movements, reformist movements, revolutionary movements, utopian movements, and migration movements. What this journal article has in common with this research is the assertion that social movements have

a goal of creating change among the public. In addition, the emergence of social movements is also said to be driven by the uncertainty that is bothering various aspects of life, such as social discomfort. The difference between this research and Haris et. al.'s study is that the article emphasizes that a social movement is something that is done only by a group of people, whereas this research discusses a social movement through activism carried out by an individual.

A further journal article that was used as a comparison with this research is entitled *Measuring The Effectiveness of Celebrity Activism: Celebrity Advocate v Celebrity Endorser*, written by Donara Barojan. This journal article mainly discussed celebrity activism which consists of two approaches, namely celebrity advocacy and celebrity endorsement. In this journal article, it is explained that the influence of celebrities in politics has long been underestimated in political science and the discipline of political communication. Apart from that, this journal article also uses the example of Taylor Swift coming out to support Democratic Party candidates in Tennessee. However, the difference between Barojan's study and this research is that this research is not focused on celebrity advocacy or celebrity endorsement, but rather emphasizes the roles of celebrities in the world of politics. The discussion of Taylor Swift and her role in politics is carried out in much greater depth in this research.

1.6 Research Framework

This research discusses activism activities carried out by individuals, specifically, a musician who incidentally is a non-political actor but has taken part in determining public awareness related to political conditions in a country.

As already emphasized, the researcher hopes that this research can determine what activism activities are carried out by individuals, specifically celebrities, and how this activism can change people's views. Taylor Swift's activism has been chosen as a topic in this research because of several factors. The first is because activism is a social and political phenomenon that is always relevant in society. The role of activism in shaping social change or discussing important issues that are currently happening in society can also be analyzed and understood. The second factor is that this research is expected to be able to identify the strategies used by activists or non-political actors to achieve social change. The researcher wants to emphasize that it is not only political actors that are able to contribute to change in the political field of a country; non-political actors are also capable. In this case, the emphasis is on musicians.

Given the reasons above, Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis' Celebrity Activism theory was chosen as the framework for this research. Their Celebrity Activism theory is a theory describing the involvement of a celebrity in political discussions who has the ability to increase public awareness, mobilize resources, and influence political decisions. The Celebrity Activism theory, in the article entitled "Celebrity Activism in International Relations: In Search of a Framework for Analysis", is the phenomenon of celebrities who have taken an active interest in world politics. However, despite being a phenomenon, very few discussions regarding celebrity activism have been published detailing causes and impacts. This article also discusses factors that may facilitate the emergence of influential individuals as transnational activists, and additional factors that explain the specific growth of celebrity activism. It explains that there are enabling factors

behind why a celebrity's actions can be labelled Celebrity Activism. These enabling factors consist of two types: external and individual. The external factors include the use of celebrities as 'Goodwill Ambassadors' by the United Nations, which encouraged non-governmental organizations to do the same thus giving rise to the second factor, namely celebrities used by NGOs. In terms of individual factors, there are the personal reasons of celebrities who feel they are freer to voice their opinions than other celebrities were decades ago. In Huliaras and Tzifakis' article, the impact of celebrity activism on increasing public awareness, mobilizing resources, and influencing political decisions was also analyzed. The case used were Princess Diana's participation in the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines and Mia Farrow's activism in relation to China's policy towards Sudan. These case studies were chosen because both activists are women who lived in developed countries. These two factors alone, being a woman and living in a developed country, are very relevant to the examination of Taylor Swift's activism using the Celebrity Activism theory.

Huliaras and Tzifakis' article also explains how celebrities are an effective 'tool' for raising public interest. This is largely due to the emergence of so-called soft news, especially as is the case in the United States. Many Americans get information about politics from various shows, such as talk shows like the Oprah Winfrey Show. This is similar to what happened with Taylor Swift; all of her activism related during the elections in the United States in 2018 until 2024 was on the various media she uses, such as her social media accounts, as well as in the songs she wrote. These approaches are also a means of spreading soft news which is effective in raising public awareness or interest. Based on these

similarities, the Celebrity Activism theory of the article *Celebrity Activism in International Relations: In Search of a Framework for Analysis*, written by Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis, was chosen as the framework for this research.

1.7 Provisional Argument

Based on the research questions previously mentioned, the results of this research will be divided into two parts. The first is how Taylor Swift activism can be said as a Celebrity Activism based on Celebrity Activism Theory and its correlation with enabling factors. The external factors themselves will consist of three, namely the use of celebrities by the United Nations, the use of celebrities by non-governmental organizations, and also freedom to act. Each of them will also have a discussion regarding how the Celebrity Activism carried out by Taylor Swift correlates with these three external factors. Then, for the second enabling factor, namely individual factors, it consists of two, namely Maintaining Popularity and Diffusion. In these two individual factors, they will also be linked to the Celebrity Activism that Taylor Swift has carried out. The next part will discuss how celebrities usually only endorse legitimate causes and how this relates to Taylor Swift only wants to talk about issues that are legitimate and non-controversial and are in line with her views, such as election issues in the United States and her support for the LGBTQ+ community. Then, the discussion will move on to the impact of Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism. The impact itself consists of three, namely increasing public awareness, fundraising and also political lobbying. The discussion will also discuss how the success of Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism is related to the three things mentioned. With all this,

it is hoped that this research can determine how non-political actors, namely musicians, can influence the world of politics, specifically in terms of elections and also what examples of activism activities have been carried out by Taylor Swift. With the results obtained, it is hoped that, in the future, messages regarding systems in this country can be conveyed in other more interesting ways, and non-political actors can also contribute to politics in their own way.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Type of the Research

This research uses qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of research, studying the social context that influences it, and finding out a perspective or view of the people. In the qualitative method, research is actually carried out disorganized, more ambiguous, and tied to specific cases (Somantri 2005).

1.8.2 Subject and Object of the Research

1. Research Subjects

The subject of this research is the actions carried out by Taylor Swift which can be considered as Celebrity Activism in International Relations. The time period is 2018-2024.

2. Research Object

In this research, the object is the response in the form of changes to the number of people, specifically young people, who voted in elections in the United States in 2018-2024.

1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

In this research, data was collected through document analysis. Documents included publications in journals, books, and relevant information from the internet

that enabled a better understanding of the increase in the number of young voters in the 2018-2024 US Elections and the role of musicians in changing public perspectives and contributing to the political sphere.

1.8.4 Process of the Research

The research process began with the selection of subjects and research objects. Following this, analysis of the document data that had been collected was carried out. In the analysis stage, the researcher also linked existing documents with the objectives of the research. The research process continued with the preparation of a research report that describes the findings in detail and draws relevant conclusions based on the data analysis.

1.9 Thesis Outline

This research aimed to analyze the influence of acts of activism carried out by musicians or non-political actors, specifically Taylor Swift, in the United States Election. The introduction section provides an overview of the topics to be discussed, such as social movements, activism, celebrity activism and Taylor Swift as a musician. The literature review examines the theory and research related to Taylor Swift's activism. The research method uses a qualitative approach which involved collecting data from documents such as journal articles, information from the internet, and books related to the existing topic. The research results were divided into two parts. The first part will explain in detail about United States election and why Taylor Swift activism is considered Celebrity Activism in International Relations based on the existing research framework and enabling factors. The following part reveals findings regarding Taylor Swift's activism and also discusses why celebrities tend to endorse legitimate causes. In this case, Taylor

Swift only talked about politics in the context of election in United States and supporting LGBTQ+ Community. This part also discusses the impact of Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism in the United States elections. The discussion also details research findings and suggestions on how musicians as non-political actors can influence the political realm and change public opinion. The conclusion section of this research summarizes the research findings and highlights Taylor Swift's activism and her role as a musician and how this has allowed her to contribute to politics in her own way. The bibliography lists the references used in the research.

CHAPTER 2

ELECTIONS IN UNITED STATES AND ENABLING FACTORS OF CELEBRITY ACTIVISM

Celebrity Activism is a phenomenon in which famous figures from the world of entertainment use their popularity and influence to support or promote certain social and political issues. This phenomenon involves various forms of action, from fundraising to social campaigns, and uses social media as the main platform to voice views. How an action carried out by a celebrity can be called Celebrity Activism determined by several factors. Two types of supporting factors that facilitate the emergence of influential individuals who are not state agents are external conditions and individual personal characteristics or internal factors (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). In this research chapter, these two factors will be discussed. The first subchapter will discuss the election in United States for a better understanding about it before moving to the next subchapter that will discuss the enabling factors of Celebrity Activism.

2.1. Elections in United States

Elections in the United States have their own characteristics that make them unique and complicated. There is no central election authority, so implementation is the responsibility of state and local governments. Elections in the US consist of two main parts, namely the Primary Election and the General Election. Primary Elections are held by political parties to select candidates who will represent them in the General Election in November. Meanwhile, General Elections are held in November, in which voters elect the president, members of the House of

Representatives, and one-third of the members of the Senate. The United States has two main political parties, namely the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Additionally, most election rules and conduct are governed by state law. Each state sets polling place operating hours and other rules in detail. Therefore, elections in the US can be said to be a complex process (Hall 2012).

It can be said to be complex because in the United States, the Electoral College system used in the United States to elect the President and Vice President. This system is based on the number of electoral votes given to each state, according to their number of representatives in Congress which is the number of Senators and members of the House of Representatives. To win the presidential election, a candidate must obtain a simple majority of the total of 538 electoral votes, namely 270 electoral votes. Although the total number of voters cannot change except through a constitutional amendment, the allocation of electoral votes in each state can be revised every decade based on Census results. Most states use a "winner-takes-all" system, in which the candidate who wins a majority of the popular vote in the state gets all of the state's electoral votes. Although controversial due to concerns about fair representation and the relevance of the popular vote, the Electoral College is enshrined in the US Constitution and is difficult to change. Despite this, the system remains an important part of the American political process (Wolf 2020).

During the 2018-2024 time period, there were many elections taking place in the United States. Some of them are the Midterm election in 2018 to elect the House of Representatives, Senate, Governor, State Legislature, and also local elections for local officials. Then in 2020 there are also the same election with the addition of a

presidential election. Then, on November 5 2024 there will be another election to elect the president in the United States.

The 2018 US midterm elections, held on November 6, were an important moment because they took place in the middle of President Donald Trump's first term in office. These elections include races for all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the Senate, as well as various gubernatorial and state legislative races. The Democratic Party successfully win a majority in the House of Representatives, while the Republican Party maintained control in the Senate. This election marked an extremely high level of voter turnout, reaching a record high in the history of US midterm elections. Voter turnout in 2018 reached 49 percent, the highest since the 1966 midterm elections and only two points below the all-time record set in 1914 (Frey, et al. 2019).

Meanwhile, the 2020 US election, held on November 3, was one of the most important and historic and tension-filled elections in United States history, especially because it took place amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic. This election pits former Vice President Joe Biden from the Democratic Party against President Donald Trump from the Republican Party. Joe Biden managed to win the election, defeating Donald Trump with a vote of 306 to 232. Apart from the presidential election, this election also included elections for all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the Senate (Igielnik, et al. 2021).

The 2024 US election which will be held on November 5, is expected to be one of the most historic and competitive elections in US history. This election will take place amidst tensions covering economic issues, abortion, foreign policy, and

the state of democracy in the country. President Biden is preparing to run for re-election as a Democrat, while former President Donald Trump plays a prominent role in the Republican Party. In addition, there is the possibility of the emergence of an independent candidate such as Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a politician and environmental lawyer. Apart from electing the president, this election will also determine the fate of 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 34 of the 100 seats in the Senate, as well as the results of the elections for governors and legislators in various states. Voter participation is expected to be high, reflecting increasing levels of public involvement in the political process (Lukpat 2024). During the 2018-2024 time period where several United States elections occurred, Taylor Swift carried out her celebrity activism related to the issue of elections in the United States.

2.2. Enabling Factors of Celebrity Activism

Celebrity involvement in politics is a phenomenon that is not new and often attracts public attention due to the unique combination of their popularity in the entertainment industry and their decision to get involved in political issues that affect society. The motivations of these celebrities vary greatly, ranging from the desire to bring about positive change, fighting for human rights and other goals. It cannot be denied that the growth and spread of Celebrity Activism is also influenced by globalization and the level of human development in the celebrities' home countries, but there are other factors that also affect it. Celebrity involvement in the world of politics can have a significant impact on people's views, move the masses, and even shape policy. In recent years, this phenomenon has become

increasingly prominent, especially in the era of social media. Celebrities can easily communicate directly with fans through platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, leveraging their presence to advocate for political issues or support specific candidates. That being said, celebrity involvement in politics is not always received positively. There is skepticism about their motivation - it is considered a mere marketing strategy to improve their image. Skepticism may arise due to concerns that most public figures may only act as activists to maintain a good reputation among their followers, strengthen their brand image, or remain relevant in the eyes of a wider audience. Although it appears that they are paying attention to various issues and allocating their time and resources, in reality, their contribution may be minimal in creating real change (Wang and Zhu 2023). Some have also voiced concerns that celebrities may not have a deep enough understanding of complex political issues, leading to their involvement being seen as impulsive or simply bandwagoning. Although there are pros and cons surrounding the impact of celebrity involvement, their popularity can in fact be a very effective tool for fighting for crucial issues or gaining public support.

One well-known example of celebrity involvement in politics is Taylor Swift. Taylor Swift is an American singer and songwriter who is famous for her success in the pop and country music industry. Born with the name Taylor Alison Swift on December 13, 1989 in Reading, Pennsylvania, Taylor Swift began her career as a country singer and then achieved great success as a pop singer. In recent years, she has played an active role in the world of politics, taking a stand and speaking out on issues she considers important. In 2018, Taylor Swift shocked the public by announcing her support for Tennessee Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen in the

US Senate election. In addition, Taylor Swift also criticized Marsha Blackburn, a Republican senatorial candidate because she felt that she could not support Blackburn's political views. Taylor Swift not only rocked the world of entertainment, but also proved that celebrity influence can reach quite high levels in the political realm. With her popularity and large fan base, Taylor Swift continues to act as an agent of change in shaping public opinion and encouraging political participation, showing that the role of celebrity is not limited to the world of entertainment only. This is also the reason why the actions carried out by Taylor Swift can be considered Celebrity Activism.

The first external factor is the existence of the United Nations. The UN has made an extensive effort to mobilize movie stars, singers and athletes for global causes. UNICEF created the concept of 'Goodwill Ambassador', which is someone who provides support and increases public awareness of issues related to children throughout the world on behalf of UNICEF. Goodwill Ambassadors are usually well-known figures, such as artists, athletes, or public figures who have a big influence in society. The use of celebrities by the UN has proven to be very effective both in increasing public awareness and in raising funds for organizational institutions. This is evident by the UN not even hesitating to use celebrities to help them raise the issues they want to raise (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). In 2011, UNICEF used the popularity of several musicians, actors and athletes to raise funds for good causes. Taylor Swift stepped in by donating water to the Tap Project, which aims to raise funds for the nearly 900 million people around the world who don't have access to safe, clean drinking water (Thompson 2011).

The second external factor is the use of celebrities by NGOs. Like the UN, NGOs also understand that celebrities can direct media attention to specific issues, raise public awareness, and provide access to the highest levels of government. Using celebrities has the major advantage of attracting media attention. When a celebrity endorses a cause or campaign, it often makes headlines, giving the organization they support broad exposure. For example, when a famous actor or singer shares a message of support or a photo on their social media platform, it can quickly spread and create a stir across multiple platforms. When someone with great influence in the entertainment or sports industry gives support to a campaign, it can reassure the public that the cause is worth supporting and has strong integrity. As an illustration, when a well-known actor or actress is chosen as an ambassador for an environmental organization, this can help convince the public of the importance of preserving the environment. The use of celebrities by NGOs has great potential to strengthen the NGO's agenda. Now, many NGOs have appointed celebrity promoters (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

This is also what happened with Taylor Swift. To date, there are actually no NGOs that openly use Taylor Swift as their ambassador or similar, but Taylor Swift's involvement in politics, such as what happened in 2018 when she supported Tennessee Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen in the US Senate election, are proof that she is able to direct the media and society towards an issue or desire that she wants to achieve and change public opinion. It is true that there has never been a statement made that Taylor Swift is a 'political ambassador' for the Democratic Party, but this does not rule out the possibility that she could have been 'used' by the political party because of her role as a celebrity who has great influence and is

considered capable of influencing many people because of the large fan base. This theory did actually arise because of allegations that Taylor Swift supported Joe Biden. A survey showed that the impact of Taylor Swift's endorsement was generally positive, with 18% of respondents expressing a tendency to support candidates supported by Taylor Swift, while 17% expressed the opposite tendency, namely not supporting candidates supported by Taylor Swift (Harris 2024).

The last but very crucial external factor is how a celebrity today enjoys greater freedom of action than celebrities of several decades ago. Because the entertainment industry today does not have as much authority as in the past, today's celebrities have greater freedom of activity and more opportunities to manage their own image (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). Celebrities are able to speak out and say whatever they want thanks to the right to freedom of speech. But in fact, this is actually contrary to what is actually stated in the United States Constitution. In the First Amendment it is stated that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”. The First Amendment basically limits how the government limits citizens' freedom of speech. So, although celebrities can now get more freedom to speak out than before in the past, this still had to be limited because it could endanger them (Johnson 2016).

Furthermore, with advances in technology and changes in culture, celebrities today have more freedom to express their opinions, especially in political contexts, when compared to the past. Technological developments, especially through social

media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, have played a big role in giving celebrities direct access to interact with their fans without intermediaries. This allows them to quickly and easily convey their views on a variety of political issues directly to their millions of followers around the world. Previously, celebrities were limited to media interviews or press conferences to convey their messages. In addition, changes in public perception have also played an important role and allowed public figures to be more open in voicing their opinions. In the past, many believed that celebrities should remain neutral or even avoid political topics because of their role in the world of entertainment. However, as time goes by, society is increasingly accepting the fact that celebrities are also citizens who have the right to express opinions on issues that are important to them. It is important for celebrities who speak for the common good to be careful in conveying their opinions, ensuring that such actions are done in the best possible way and do not harm anyone (Supernant 2022).

The freedom of act that celebrities have, especially Taylor Swift, is also based on public expectations. With her large number of fans and level of fame, she is expected to be able to use her platform to voice change and raise social awareness. Because remaining silent and ignoring social issues can have a negative impact (Taylor 2019). Taylor Swift was initially known for keeping her political life private. However, with the 2018 United States general election, she broke her political silence and expressed her support for the Democratic candidate in Tennessee through posts on her social media accounts. Taylor Swift's decision to express her views on political issues caused widespread reaction and discussion.

This shows her personal feelings and beliefs prompted her to provide support and take a public stand at that time.

The reason she only dared to express her political views at that time was revealed in her interview in *Elle*, 2019, namely, "I'm finding my voice in terms of politics. I took a lot of time educating myself on the political system and the branches of government that are signing off on bills that affect our day-to-day lives. I saw so many issues that put our most vulnerable citizens at risk, and felt like I had to speak up to try and help make a change so did I feel informed enough to speak about it to my 114 million followers invoking racism and provoking fear through thinly veiled messaging is not what I want from our leaders, and I realized that it is actually my responsibility to use my influence against that disgusting rhetoric. I'm going to do more to help. We have a big race coming up next year." Apart from that, in her interview in *The Guardian*, 2019, she also added that after problems with rapper Kanye West in 2016 and her mother's illness, she felt unable to appear in public. She said, "I was just trying to protect my mental health – not read the news very much, go cast my vote, tell people to vote. I just knew what I could handle and I knew what I couldn't. I was literally about to break". She also added, "We're a democracy – at least, we're supposed to be – where you're allowed to disagree, dissent, debate. I really think that he thinks this is an autocracy." She said this in response to Donald Trump's presidency and the reasons for her decision to side with the Democratic party.

To conclude the discussion on the external factors, celebrity involvement in politics is a long-standing phenomenon that attracts public attention due to a

combination of their popularity and decision to get involved in political issues. The motivations of these celebrities vary but their involvement is also able to impact public views, mobilize the masses, and shape policy. Taylor Swift is an example of celebrity involvement in politics, with her actions being considered Celebrity Activism. The external factors of Celebrity Activism, as outlined in this section, consist of the United Nations using the concept of 'Goodwill Ambassador', NGOs using celebrities to help support the issues they want to raise, celebrities having more freedom of opinion these days. These three external factors are related to each other and are also closely related to the actions taken by Taylor Swift in her role in politics. The Celebrity Activism carried out by her can actually be an effective tool to fight for crucial issues and gain public support in a political context.

There are also individual factors which explain how Celebrity Activism occurs. In terms of individual factors, there are two factors that underlie the occurrence of Celebrity Activism which will be explained in this subchapter. The first individual factor is that celebrities who pay attention to global issues or take political initiatives do so to maintain their popularity. It cannot be denied that we are currently living in an era where continued fame requires constant exposure. Additionally, celebrity involvement in activism may also reflect an attempt to change a tarnished image or divert public attention from past controversies. For example, a celebrity experiencing a decline in popularity may try to capitalize on global issues or get involved in political initiatives as a strategy to regain the public spotlight. By following trends on issues that are currently hot or that attract global attention, they can attract huge media attention and receive recognition from the public. Clearly, personal motivation plays an important role in encouraging

celebrities to engage in global issues (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). Celebrities often support causes that already have widespread popularity. However, the impact on their popularity can be much greater if they support movements that challenge current norms, thereby helping to expand the boundaries of public acceptance (Engler 2023).

This may also have occurred in the case of Taylor Swift and her role in politics. These individual factors cannot actually be ascertained because it will be very difficult to determine what a person's true motivation is. However, it could be that the actions taken by Taylor Swift were simply because she wants to maintain her popularity and stay relevant in the wider community. An effective way to do this is to raise issues that are currently hotly discussed. In the context of diverting public attention from past controversies, Taylor Swift's involvement in politics could also be her way of making people forget her past controversy in 2016 where she had a feud with rapper Kanye West and celebrity Kim Kardashian which earned her the nickname snake. Her social media accounts were filled with comments containing snake emojis. The comments and bullying she received made her delete all her Twitter and Facebook avatar images and headers, as well as delete her posts on Tumblr and Instagram. Even her official website became a black page. She actually went on hiatus starting in 2016, but she finally returned in 2017. So, it is possible that breaking her silence on politics in 2018 was a means for her to make people forget what happened to her in previous years. Taylor Swift may truly believe what she says, but that's likely due to the fact that everything she says in public is often the result of a complex image management process, designed to maintain her reputation as well as generate income (Holmes 2018).

The second individual factor that explains celebrity activism is diffusion, where celebrities mobilize celebrities. Celebrities may want to be an example that impresses others and hope that those people will then emulate their commitment, or in other words, celebrities may want to pressure other celebrities to become more active (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010). In the context of the diffusion concept, celebrities not only involve themselves in activism, but also act as examples that influence others to imitate their behavior. When celebrities engage in activism, they often have greater access to media platforms and wider audiences. Their fame and public exposure allows their message to reach a larger and more diverse audience than other activists or organizations could achieve. Such wider access can inspire their fans and followers to get involved or support the same cause. Furthermore, when someone who is liked by many people engages in an activity or expresses an opinion on a particular issue, this can trigger an emotional response and motivation for their fans to do the same. This also applies and has the potential to influence their other celebrity peers.

This could have also happened to Taylor Swift, although she did not clearly state that she wanted other celebrities to do the same as her. However, in her Instagram post where she supported Tennessee Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen in the US Senate election, she also stated that she hopes people learn and understand the candidates running for office themselves and vote based on who best represents each person's values. She also stated firmly that young people who are able to vote for elections must use their privilege to make their votes meaningful.

Her post supporting the candidate she supported also received responses from several other celebrities. For example, American YouTuber and actor, Tyler Oakley, wrote on Twitter that he was grateful that Taylor Swift spoke out on politics and he hoped that this was just the beginning. In addition, American actress and film producer, Alyssa Milano also thanked Taylor Swift in a post on Twitter because Taylor Swift had opposed anti-gay senate candidates. Other celebrities may not directly follow what Taylor Swift did, but some of them felt helped and grateful because of the voice that Taylor Swift gave (Billboard 2018).

Based on the two individual factors described, the individual motivation of a celebrity cannot really be known because it is unpredictable. Some celebrities appear very sincere in all the actions they do. While it is possible that some celebrities become involved in global or political issues with less than sincere motives, it is important not to lump all individuals together. Many of them have deeper and more varied reasons and motivations. What is important is the real effect they have on society.

As Taylor Swift did in her activism in the world of politics, in her writing for Elle magazine, Taylor Swift stated that she had found her voice in the realm of politics. Over time, she spent a lot of time educating herself about political systems that have a direct impact on everyday life. She recognized the many problems that threatened the nation's most vulnerable citizens, and she felt a responsibility to speak out for change and put her influence to good use (Swift 2019). However, the two individual factors that have been explained in this subchapter could still be the reason for Celebrity Activism carried out by Taylor Swift.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTENT OF TAYLOR SWIFT'S CELEBRITY ACTIVISM

3.1. Taylor Swift only Endorses Legitimate Causes when Carrying Out Celebrity Activism

In today's age of information and openness, celebrities are increasingly inclined to take a more active role in supporting legitimate causes. Many celebrities in this era show a tendency to only lend support to causes they deem right and in line with their values. One of the main factors is the increasing awareness among celebrities about social responsibility and the huge influence they have on fans and the general public. They realize that their support of a cause can have a significant impact and shape public perception. In addition, the development of celebrity activism that focuses on social, environmental and humanitarian issues has also played an important role in this change. Celebrities are trying to ensure their involvement in the campaign has a real positive impact. Furthermore, with increasing transparency and openness in the digital era, celebrities have become more vulnerable to public scrutiny. Therefore, they tend to choose to support causes that have positive goals and are in line with ethical and moral values. Supporting legitimate causes through endorsements helps build a positive image, increase credibility, and maintain good relations with fans and society at large (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

Likewise, in Celebrity Activism carried out in the political realm, most celebrity activists currently tend to avoid the most controversial domestic or international political issues. A number of fundamental reasons can explain this phenomenon.

First, celebrities tend to consider the consequences to their image when involved in controversial issues. Highly controversial issues can divide fans' opinions, risk losing support, and even harm their careers. Second, financial security and job opportunities are the main considerations. Controversial issues have the potential to give rise to boycotts or rejection from various parties, including fans, sponsors, or manufacturers. Therefore, celebrities who care about their careers and income often choose to get involved in issues that are considered relatively safe and acceptable by various parties. Furthermore, a number of celebrities prefer to focus on issues that are closer to their hearts and can have a positive impact in the long term. By choosing these issues, they can build an image as caring and responsible figures without having to get involved in potentially detrimental political conflicts (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

This is also what happened to the actions carried out by Taylor Swift. Her silence on politics was broken in 2018 when she endorsed two Democratic congressional candidates in Tennessee namely Jim Cooper for re-election to the House of Representatives and former Tennessee governor Phil Bredesen for the Senate. She openly expressed her political views in a post on her personal Instagram account, where she wrote a long paragraph about them and also how she hopes that young people who already have the opportunity to vote can use this privilege to determine the choice that best suits their needs and their respective beliefs. Not only that, Taylor Swift is also very well known because she upholds the rights of LGBTQ+ people (Chiappa 2023).

In support of LGBTQ+ people, she also sent a letter to senator Lamar Alexander in 2019 on her personal Twitter account, in which she asked the senator to vote to support the Equality Act in the senate. She also created a petition so that her fans could join in supporting this. The Equality Act itself is a law in the United States that provides consistent and explicit anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people in various key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service (The Equality Act 2023).

Taylor Swift also expressed her support for LGBTQ+ groups in the form of the song "You Need to Calm Down" which she released in June 2019. The video clip for the song is a big statement; a statement that was made stronger by it being released to celebrate pride month. The lyrics of the song are also very LGBTQ+ related, including lyrics such as "Why are you mad? When could you be GLAAD?" and "Shade never made anybody less gay". GLAAD is the abbreviation of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and is an American non-governmental organization dedicated to LGBTQ advocacy in media and culture (Suleman 2019). In the lyrics of the song, Taylor Swift wrote the word 'GLAAD' instead of 'Glad' because she wanted to highlight the word and show a message of support for the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, at the end of the video clip for the song, Taylor Swift also displays an article where she asks her fans to sign the Equality Act petition that she has created. Through this song, the political goals that Taylor Swift wants to achieve are clear. Taylor Swift not only showcases LGBTQ+ celebrities in her music videos, but also leverages her significant influence to support concrete

political causes that have a profound impact on the lives of millions of Americans who are often overlooked (Jennings 2019).

In 2020, Taylor Swift launched a documentary about her life on Netflix entitled "Miss Americana". The film presents a look at a transformational phase in her life, chronicling nearly two decades in the spotlight, and also reflects on her childhood, her values, the pressures of fame, and her impressive career accomplishments. In the documentary, she also talks about the divisive political issues until she finally released a song called "Only the Young".

The song indicates Taylor Swift's response and feelings towards political events in the United States, especially after the 2018 general election. It reflects upon her disappointment and dissatisfaction with the election results and the political path taken by the country. Through its lyrics, the song depicts a spirit of resistance and optimism towards future change, inspiring listeners, especially the younger generation, to remain positive and active in achieving change. From start to to the end, the song explains clearly her hopes for the younger generation to participate in politics and save the nation's future. However, the lyrics that best describe her hopes can be seen in the part, "Only one thing can save us, Only the young."

There is also another song entitled "Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince" that she wrote as a result of her disappointment with politics in the United States. Taylor Swift provides notes regarding the meaning and inspiration for the song through Spotify's Love, Taylor: Lover Enhanced Album, "This song is about disillusionment with our crazy world of politics and inequality, set in a metaphorical high school". The song "Only the Young" and "Miss Americana &

the Heartbreak Prince” can be considered successful media used by Taylor Swift to convey political messages and her vision of the future and hopes through her art and music. Recently, during her busy music tour entitled "The Eras Tour", she took time to voice her opinions about politics. In July 2023, she posted a story on her personal Instagram account detailing how she greeted her fans in Nashville to vote in early voting for city officials and several seats across the state that began that day. In September 2023, she also posted a story on her personal Instagram account where she reminded her fans to register to vote. Then, on November 7 2023 when elections were held in local offices and several states, she also made a story on her Instagram account reminding her fans to use their voices and vote. Most recently, on March 5 2024, she uploaded a post on her Instagram story reminding people to vote. So, up until the writing of this research, Taylor Swift has still been actively voicing her voice regarding politics, especially in the context of elections in the United States.

With several things related to politics that she has done since 2018, it could be said that Taylor Swift has begun to have the courage to increasingly voice her opinions on political matters. This leaves her no longer apolitical. However, from these several actions, it is also clear that she has never entered the realm of politics that is too controversial. She has only dared to dive into the common political topics, not other domestic or international issues that might endanger her career. Her involvement in politics through just discussing the election was enough to get her mixed responses. There are people who are very supportive and appreciate it, for example an American actor and filmmaker, Rob Reiner. He wrote on his personal Twitter account that he was grateful to Taylor Swift for speaking up and

that Taylor Swift could really change the United States by helping her fans realize how critical and strong their voices are.

However, negative responses also came, such as from an American conservative activist, Charlie Kirk. He posted on his Twitter about how Taylor Swift supported a Democrat in the Tennessee senate election and made a statement about Marsha Blackburn that Charlie considered ridiculous. He suggested that Taylor Swift had absolutely no idea about what she was talking about. He even mentioned Taylor Swift's feud with Kanye West. Taylor Swift's choice to only enter politics on a soft level and discuss elections or speak out for the rights of LGBTQ+ groups can be said to be a wise choice as she is only endorsing legitimate causes. With all the responses she got for all her actions, she may choose to stay on this course and not to discuss other more controversial issues because it could harm her career.

3.2. The Impact of Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism

The impacts of celebrity activism are varied. Through their presence in social and political issues, celebrities have become agents of change who can influence various things. The impact of celebrity activism can be discussed in three ways, namely in terms of public awareness, fundraising and political lobbying. Celebrities are very effective in increasing public interest (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

As is widely known, the presence of celebrities in activism has the ability to expand visibility and increase awareness of certain issues among society. As highly popular, beloved public figures with millions of followers worldwide, their messages and statements have a wider reach than that of ordinary individuals,

activists, or other organizations. By utilizing their platforms, celebrities are able to bring issues that may not have been addressed by the media to the public's attention. Their participation in activism can inspire their fans and followers to take part in social actions or support similar causes. By having a strong influence, celebrities are able to become role models for others to follow in their footsteps. When they express support for an issue, it often triggers an emotional response and motivation for their fans to join in achieving the same goal. In addition, celebrity activism also has the potential to influence government policy and bring about changes in government structures. Celebrity endorsement of certain political issues can put additional pressure on policymakers to take action in line with public aspirations. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the impact of celebrity activism allows us to better understand their role in bringing about change, especially in a political context (Voleti 2020).

Why celebrities can be said to be very effective in increasing public interest is none other than because of the existence of soft news, especially in the United States where Americans get information about politics from entertainment programs. In this case, Taylor Swift being able to move her fans in a political context, is considered soft news. Taylor Swift can also be said to have been very successful in terms of increasing public interest, as evidenced by the number of registrants which increases drastically as reported on the non-profit, nonpartisan voting registration and technology platform in America, Vote.org page every time she posted something reminding her fans to vote in the election. When Taylor Swift posted on her personal Instagram account in 2018 about her choice in the election and asked people to vote in the election, especially young people, Vote.org stated that they

reached 65,000 new registrations in a single 24-hour period after Taylor Swift's posts. The site has also experienced a huge jump in visitor numbers with 155,940 unique visitors in the subsequent 24 hours (Guthrie 2018) .

Back in 2023, when Taylor Swift posted a story on her personal Instagram account about asking people to register to vote, the organization also said they received a total of 35,252 new registrations on the following Tuesday, marking the largest National Voter Registration Day since 2020; in total, 157,041 eligible voters visited the site on that Tuesday (Kaufman 2023). The organization also saw a 72% increase in 18-year-old voter registrations compared to 2019 and a 115% increase in that age range compared to 2022. Thus, Taylor Swift delivered a significant increase in voter registration in the US (Peters 2023). The data obtained proves that Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism has had an impact on increasing public awareness.

Taylor Swift's success in raising public awareness has been recognized by many people and experts. Andrea Hailey, CEO of Vote.org, said that young people are increasingly aware of the connection between the issues they care about and voter participation, noting that registering 30,000 voters in an election can have a huge impact. Hailey referred to Taylor Swift in her statement. Additionally, FOX News presenter Jesse Watters speculated on January 9 that Taylor Swift may have been used as a 'psyop' or psychological operation to influence voters to vote for a particular candidate. Former FBI Special Agent, Stuart Kaplan, also stated that Taylor Swift has great influence and has the potential to influence voters significantly just by the number of her followers (Hughes 2024).

Taylor Swift's success in increasing public awareness and giving a large spike in the number of registrants in the US elections does not stop there. It was apparently also recognized by the European Commission Vice President, Margaritis Schinas. Starting on May 9 2024, Taylor Swift will hold her The Eras Tour concert in Paris for 4 days. Margaritis Schinas in his interview stated, "Taylor Swift last September, she made a social media call to young Americans to register to vote and the day after her post 35,000 young Americans registered. Now, Taylor Swift on May 9 – Europe Day – will be in Paris for a concert, so I would very much hope that she does the same for young Europeans." Taylor Swift's success in increasing public awareness of course cannot be separated from her profession as a celebrity which makes her have many fans and makes it easier for her to get public attention (Le Monde 2024).

The next impact in celebrity activism is in the context of fundraising. Taylor Swift is one of the richest and most influential women in the world, reaching billionaire status in 2023 thanks to the huge success of her concert tour, the Eras Tour. Despite her vast wealth, Taylor Swift has long demonstrated a generous attitude with her wealth. Over time, the famous singer and songwriter has actively supported various causes, making donations to both charities and individuals. She donates her wealth to many things, such as individuals or fans who suffer from certain illnesses or disasters and to certain organizations as well. Based on data from the official website of GoFundMe, an American for-profit crowdfunding platform, Taylor Swift has donated a lot to various people in need since 2018, and this does not include donations she gave directly through other media or means. For example, in 2016, Taylor Swift pledged to donate \$1 million in aid to flood victims

in Louisiana, after heavy rainfall caused major flooding in the state (Dailey and Aniftos 2024). In addition to providing a financial donation, she also encouraged other individuals who had the means to provide assistance and send support and prayers to those affected by the disaster. In 2020, Taylor Swift showed a gesture of generosity by making a \$1,300 donation after seeing two of her fans upload a video featuring her song "Only the Young" which included a request for donations to help a needy family in Minneapolis. The money was used to buy hair and skin care products for people of color. In 2023, she also donated \$1 million to the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee after a tornado hit the area. There is still many more cases of generosity from Taylor Swift, which of course have also motivated her fans to imitate the actions she takes. Therefore, fundraising is also an impact of Celebrity Activism, and a form that has been carried out by Taylor Swift.

The third impact of Celebrity Activism, which is no less interesting, is political lobbying. The results of celebrity activism in terms of political lobbying are not very impressive, despite the fact that celebrities have helped to put certain issues on the table (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

Political lobbying is also evident in activism carried out by Taylor Swift. During the period when she voiced her opinion regarding politics, her choices in elections, and the need to vote in elections, she succeeded in raising these issues and in increasing the number of registrants on the Vote.org site. However, in reality, the actions she took were not strong enough to influence outcome. In 2018, even though she openly showed support for Tennessee Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen, the

winner of that election was in fact still Marsha Blackburn (Paulson and Tamburin 2018).

In that case, the stamp of approval from one of the biggest stars in the world did not prevent Phil Bredesen from being beaten. Taylor Swift's Instagram post did not necessarily change the competition from Marsha Blackburn's to Phil Bredesen's favor. A professor of political science at Bowling Green State University, David Jackson, stated that celebrities do not really have a big influence in changing things. Similarly, Paul Brewer, a communications professor at the University of Delaware also stated that celebrity endorsements can help politicians win in cases that are almost resolved, but in the end "this was not a marginal case in the end." (Paulson and Tamburin 2018).

There are various reasons why the impact of Celebrity Activism in political lobbying is considered ineffective. One factor may be due to celebrities' lack of adequate understanding regarding complex political issues, so that the actions they take can be impulsive. Additionally, it is possible that skepticism arises from society towards the influence of celebrities in the political arena for personal or ideological reasons. The public may prefer to listen to the views and suggestions of experts who have a deeper understanding of political issues, and this could be one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of celebrity participation in the world of politics.

The three impacts of Celebrity Activism as explained in this subchapter are all evident in the Celebrity Activism carried out by Taylor Swift as a musician. Overall she has been able to increase public awareness regarding certain issues that she

wants to raise, raise funds and inspire her fans to do the same, but in the aspect of political lobbying, her actions have not been successful in being able to change political decisions or policies in the United States (Huliaras and Tzifakis 2010).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

This research emphasizes the important role of celebrity involvement in politics, especially in increasing voter participation in general elections. The focus of this research is on Taylor Swift and the activism she carried out to influence the United States general elections in 2018 until 2024. The phenomenon of celebrity activism is increasingly prominent and well known in the world, and this research explored the impact of Taylor Swift's activism on elections in the United States, by examining the factors underlying this activism, Taylor Swift's influence in the political process, and the type of activism she carries out.

In this research, findings show that Taylor Swift's activism significantly influenced voter participation in the United States general election. Endorsements from well-respected and well-liked celebrities have a major impact in increasing political awareness and voter participation, encouraging their fans to become more actively involved in the political process. With her popularity and influence, as well as the use of her social media platforms, Taylor Swift has succeeded in drawing public attention to political issues and the importance of participation in elections.

The factors underlying Celebrity Activism such as Taylor Swift's activism can be divided into two categories, namely external factors and individual factors. External factors include the existence of the United Nations' "Goodwill Ambassador" concept where famous people, such as artists, athletes, or public

figures, are used as tools to help raise the issues they want to raise. Taylor Swift herself participated in the Tap Water program held by UNICEF in 2011 to help those who have limited access to safe and clean water. Another external factor is non-governmental organizations which also take advantage of celebrity popularity to increase public awareness of the issues they want to raise. Taylor Swift's involvement in endorsing Tennessee Democratic Party Candidate Phil Bredesen in the US Senate election actually never resulted in her being declared involved or specifically affiliated with any NGO or being a political ambassador for the Democratic Party. However, she is still able to influence public opinion through the use of her social media platforms.

The third external factor is that celebrities' freedom of opinion is freer than it was in the past. With technological developments, celebrities have become freer to voice their opinions through their personal social media platforms. Taylor Swift initially chose not to comment on political issues, but in 2018, she decided to break her silence and voice her support for the Democratic candidate in Tennessee through a post on her personal Instagram account.

In regards to individual factors, Taylor Swift's activism may have also include personal motivations, such as the desire to maintain popularity or change her public image from past controversies. One of the individual factors underlying celebrity activism is the diffusion, where celebrities mobilize fellow celebrities. When celebrities engage in activism, their messages reach a wider audience, inspiring their fans and followers to join in or support the same causes. For example, when Taylor Swift declared her support for Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen in the

US Senate election, she encouraged people to get to know and understand the competing candidates and vote based on the values they hold. She also emphasized that the younger generation who have the right to vote must use their privilege to give meaning to their votes. This action allows other people or other celebrities to follow in the same footsteps.

This research also found that celebrities only support causes they consider legitimate. Many celebrities today tend to choose to support only those things that they consider to be right and in line with their values. This is due to the increasing awareness among celebrities about their social responsibilities and the huge influence they have on fans and the general public. Taylor Swift also only supports causes that are considered legitimate, such as supporting two Democratic congressional candidates in Tennessee. Additionally, she also supports the rights of LGBTQ+ groups which she expresses through the songs she creates. Her concerns about political conditions in the United States are also conveyed through songs and posts on social media. Her decision to only support causes she considers legitimate is a good choice considering she might risk harming her career if she gets too deeply involved in controversial issues.

This research also highlights the impacts of celebrity activism, such as that carried out by Taylor Swift. The impact includes various things, such as increasing public awareness, fundraising and political lobbying. In the context of increasing public awareness, Taylor Swift was successful because she was proven to be able to increase the number of registered voters in just a few hours after making a statement to encourage people to vote, as reported by Vote.org. In terms of

fundraising, Taylor Swift has also made a lot of donations, which of course encouraged many people act similarly. Unfortunately, in terms of political lobbying, Taylor Swift has not been successful. Even though she succeeded in increasing public awareness and the number of voters who registered, in fact her support for the candidate she supported did not result in the candidate winning.

Table 1. Analysis Result

VARIABLES AND INDICATORS	DEFINITION	ANALYSIS
<p>Enabling Factors of the Celebrity Activism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Factors: United Nations, The used of Celebrities by NGOs and Freedom to Act • Individual Factors: Maintaining Popularity and Diffusion 	<p>External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations: The existence of the UN mobilizes famous people who have great influence and creates the concept of Goodwill Ambassadors. • The use of Celebrity by NGOs: The use of celebrities by NGOs to draw media attention to specific issues, raise public awareness, and provide access to the highest levels of government. • Freedom to Act: Celebrities today enjoy greater freedom of action than celebrities did a few decades ago. 	<p>External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2011, Taylor Swift was involved in the Tap Water project held by UNICEF to raise funds for good causes. • No NGO has openly named Taylor Swift as its ambassador or political ambassador, but her involvement in the world of politics does not rule out the possibility that she is being used by the political party. • In 2018, Taylor Swift expressed her support for Democratic Party candidates in Tennessee through posts on her social media accounts.
	Individual Factors	Individual Factors

VARIABLES AND INDICATORS	DEFINITION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining Popularity: Celebrities pay attention to global issues or take political initiatives to maintain their popularity. • Diffusion: Celebrities mobilize other celebrities by wanting to be role models who impress others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift may just want to maintain her popularity after going on hiatus and make people forget about her past controversy. • Taylor Swift stated in her Instagram post that she wants people to learn and understand the candidates of an election.
<p>The Content of Taylor Swift’s Celebrity Activism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift only endorses legitimate causes • The Impact of Taylor Swift’s Celebrity Activism: Public Awareness, Fundraising and Political Lobbying 	<p>Endorsing Legitimate Causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrities support legitimate causes out of social responsibility and their influence on fans and the general public can have a significant impact and shape society perceptions. 	<p>Endorsing Legitimate Causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift only speaks in the context of the elections taking place in the United States and also her support for LGBTQ+ groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Awareness: • Celebrities conducting activism have the ability to expand visibility and raise awareness of certain issues in society. • Fundraising: Celebrities through the use of their popularity are able to help with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift succeeded in increasing the number of voter registrants, especially young voters. • Taylor Swift has made a lot of donations over the years. • Taylor Swift was not successful in conducting

VARIABLES AND INDICATORS	DEFINITION	ANALYSIS
	<p>fundraising for good causes because they encourage their followers, fans or other people to do the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying: Celebrities through their role in the political realm are also able to influence how political lobbying occurs in that country. 	<p>political lobbying because the candidate she supported did not succeed in becoming the winner.</p>

In conclusion, this research shows that the active participation of celebrities, especially by musician Taylor Swift, can have a significant impact on influencing voter numbers and the political process. Even though politics is still a controversial topic, often debated, and subject to challenges and criticism, Taylor Swift's popularity and influence as a musician can increase public awareness and encourage voter participation in elections in the United States. This research also revealed that Taylor Swift's Celebrity Activism was not perfect because she failed to carry out Political Lobbying or even change political decisions. It is also important for the general public and political stakeholders to understand and acknowledge the influence of celebrity activism in the world of politics, especially in the context of elections in the United States.

4.2 Recommendation

Based on the results of the research and analysis that has been carried out, there are several suggestions for further research. It is hoped that these suggestions can make a positive contribution to the development of knowledge related to the topic being researched. First, it is advisable to analyze the long-term impact of celebrity activism in politics. Although this research has focused on the influence of celebrity activism, particularly by musician Taylor Swift, in increasing public awareness and voter participation in elections in the United States, it is important to look at the long-term impact of celebrity activism in a political context.

Second, the research subject in this study of celebrity activism is Taylor Swift. For future research, it is recommended to consider subjects from other professions to gain a broader understanding of the impact and influence of celebrity activism carried out by individuals other than musicians.

Third, there needs to be special teaching that connects politics or international relations in general with works of art or popular culture. There is currently little discussion of this topic and, with a better understanding of the correlation between politics or international relations and works of art or popular culture, society can become more critical and informed in matters related to politics.

Fourth, future research can dig deeper into people's perceptions and responses to celebrity activism. Although the main focus of this research is the impact of celebrity activism, especially musician Taylor Swift, on voter numbers in elections in the United States, it is also important to understand how society responds to and perceives this celebrity activism. Qualitative research involving interviews or

surveys could provide deeper insight into the public's perceptions and responses to celebrity activism.

In addition, with all the Celebrity Activism that has been carried out by Taylor Swift and the evidence that she only wants to endorse legitimate causes, this also needs to be considered regarding further research as to why Taylor Swift until this research was written has not yet spoken out about what is happening in Palestine, even though the issue in Palestine is also a legitimate issue. Taylor Swift, with all her popularity, has been able to make herself very influential. So, research about this matter needs to be carried out in more depth. It is hoped that these recommendations can serve as a guide for future research and contribute to further understanding of the role of celebrity activism in the world of politics.

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