# Understanding and Predicting Activist Intentions: An Extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2019 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2019

ABSTRACT

Despite the societal importance of activism, the understanding of activist intentions remained limited (Liebert, Leve, & Hu, 2011; Klar & Kasser, 2009). The current study used the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB) to examine two structural models of low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The traditional TPB model was tested against a hybrid commitment model that also assessed past activist behaviors and activist identity. Participants ($N$ = 383) were recruited through social media, professional list-serves, and word of mouth. Results indicated a good model fit for both the traditional TPB model (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .03; $\chi^2(120) = 3760.62$, $p < .01$) and the commitment model (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(325) = 7848.07$, $p < .01$). The commitment model accounted for notably more variance in both low-risk activist intentions (78.9% in comparison to 26.5% for the traditional TPB model) and high-risk activist intentions (58.9% in comparison to 11.2% for the traditional TPB model). Despite this, the traditional TPB model was deemed the better model as the higher variance explained in the commitment model was almost entirely due to the inclusion of past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors. A post-hoc analysis that incorporated sexual orientation and religious affiliation as covariates into the traditional model also led to a good-fitting model (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(127) = 217.18$, $p < .01$) and accounted for increased variance in low-risk activist intentions (29.7%) and high-risk activist intentions (18.7%) compared to the traditional model. The merits of each of the structural models and the practical implications for practice and research were discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Alisia Tran, for guiding me through my doctoral degree in counseling psychology. Without her, I would not be here today at the end. She has been supportive of my social justice efforts and has advocated for me when things have been rough. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Terrence Tracey and Dr. Cristalis Capielo. They both have been instrumental in helping me learn the research process and getting me to the finish line. Acknowledgments are also due for my classmates who have been huge supports for me over the years. Being able to share our mutual struggles together helped build my resilience and persevere. Thanks are also due to the activists involved with movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #NoDAPL, and more. These activists do not receive the recognition they deserve and have been instrumental in both inspiring this dissertation and making this country a better place. Finally, I would like to thank my family and my partner. Without all of you, I would not have the privilege, confidence, and emotional well-being to pursue my goals and dreams. I haven't always been as present for the past few years due to grad school, but I can't wait to begin the next chapter of my life with all of you.

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## Introduction

Marginalized individuals (e.g., people of color, women, LGBT+ people, people with disabilities, and religious minorities) face prejudice, overt discrimination, and apathy to their plight from large segments of the American population (Asada, Yoshida, & Whipp, 2013; Carter, 2007; Corak, 2013; Herek, 2004; Reardon & Bischoff, 2011). Many marginalized individuals lack the equal rights and resources necessary for true self-determination, preventing the achievement of an equitable society (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2013). *Activism*, collective sociopolitical actions to solve problems of oppression, is one tool that can help in achieving social justice (Corning & Myers, 2002).

While many scholars are beginning to recognize the importance of social justice (Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks, & Weintrub, 2004; Hegarty, 2000; Ivey & Collins, 2003; Moane, 2006), theories predicting intentions to engage in activist behaviors have been limited (de Leeuw, Valois, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2015; Jones & Brewster, 2016). Fortunately, there is a plausible template for understanding activist intentions in behavioral theories (Ajzen, 1991). The *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB) posits that attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms are useful in predicting behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Despite this, the efficacy of TPB in predicting activist intentions remains untested; thus far, TPB has only been used to predict environmentalism and not activism (de Leeuw et al., 2015; Kaiser & Scheuthle, 2003).

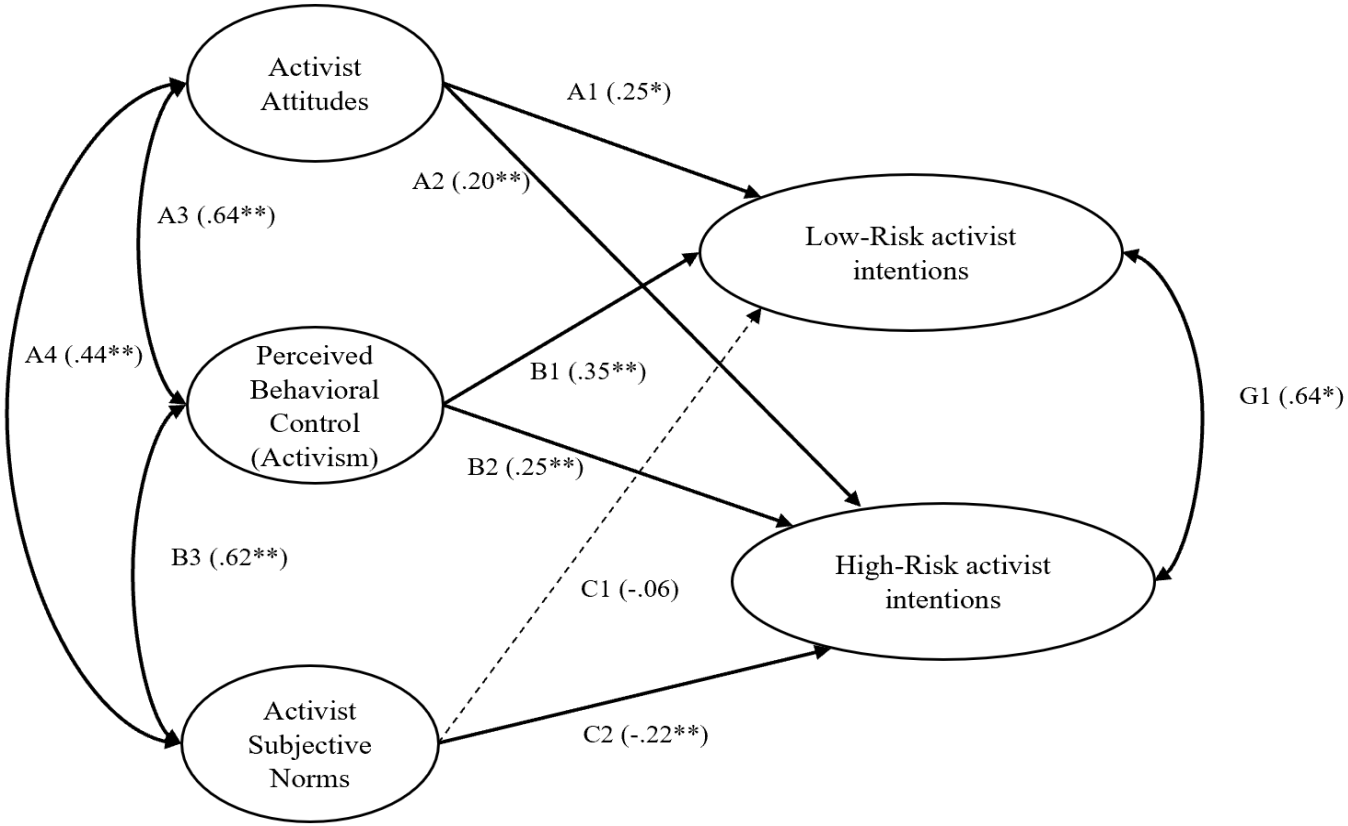
There are also reasons to believe that a traditional TPB model (attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms; Ajzen, 1991) of activist intentions could be improved by incorporating additional factors. Activism is likely a behavior

where other factors such as identity and past behavior may explain additional variance (Fekadu & Craft, 2001; Smith et al., 2007). For example, as activism involves disrupting the status quo, there are potentially negative consequences that would make one's commitment to activism (i.e., activist identity and past activist behaviors) relevant (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Eisenberg, Eggum, & Di Giunta, 2010; Kteily, Bruneau, Waytz, & Cotterill, 2015; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012). It is likely that indicators of one's commitment to activism, such as past activist behaviors and activist identity, would increase TPB's ability to predict activist intentions (Rise, Sheeran, & Huckkelberg, 2010; Smith et al., 2007).

The current study used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the traditional TPB model (Figure 1) and a commitment model that also incorporated past behaviors as predictors and activist identity as a mediator (Figure 2). It was predicted that both models would be a good fit but that the commitment model would explain additional variance. Exploring and examining the hypothesized models in the current study will help in better understanding activism, leading to more efficacious interventions to foster activist intentions. The knowledge generated from the current study will be of particular interest to helping professionals, such as counseling psychologists, who are becoming increasingly interested in incorporating social justice and activism into their professional roles (Goodman et al. 2004; Mallinckrodt, Miles, & Levy, 2014; Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007). These professions have already been attempting for some years to make their work more inclusive (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1994) and view social justice activism as a natural extension of multicultural competence (Ivey & Collins, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). The current study helps social justice-minded helping

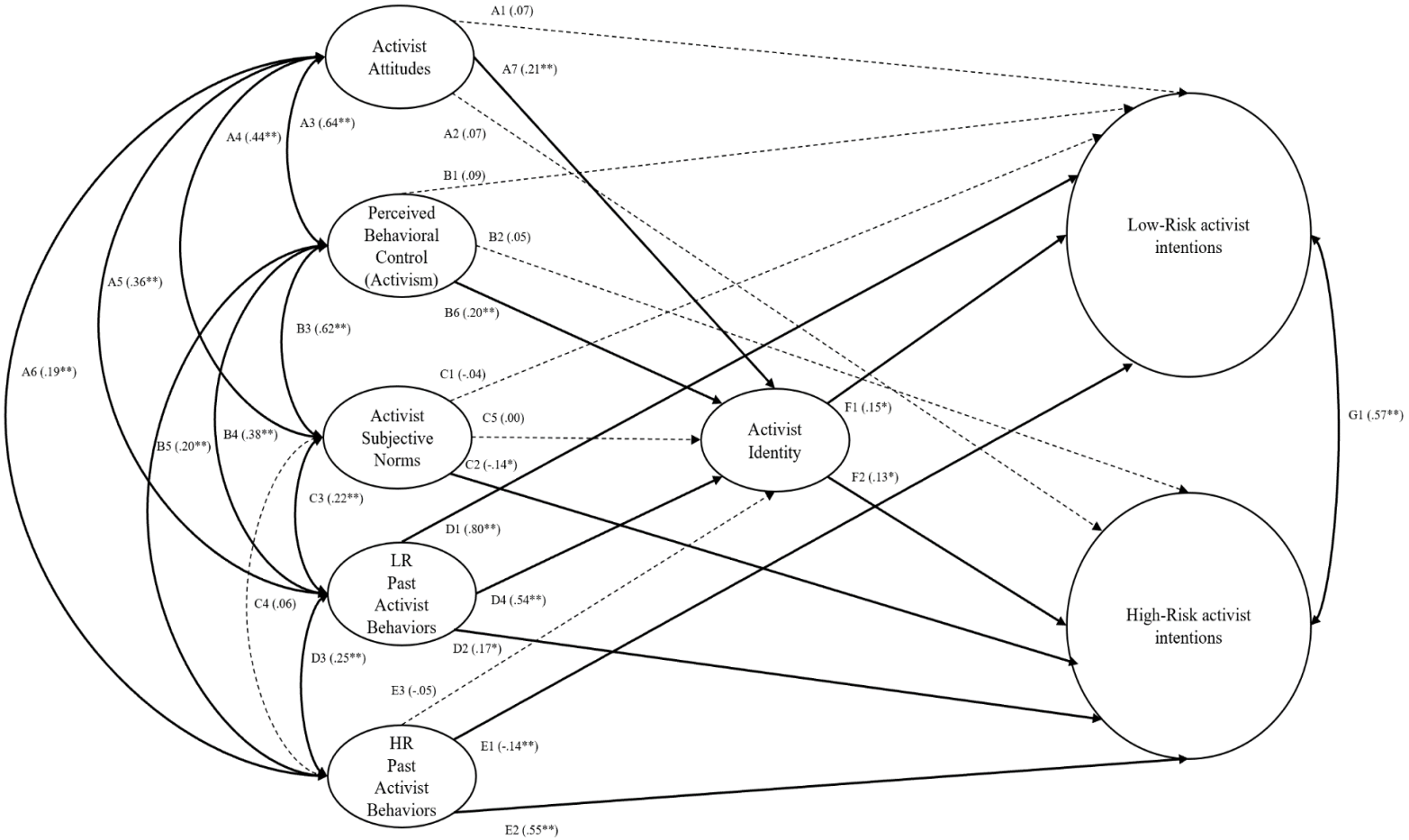
professionals by identifying factors that are associated with low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions.

*Figure 1.* Traditional TPB Structural Model




Coefficients shown are standardized values. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

F*igure 2*. Commitment Structural Model




Coefficients shown are standardized values. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

## Background

Though many definitions of activism exist (Corning & Myers, 2002; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003), the current study is primarily interested in activism as a behavior that is grounded in social justice. For the purposes of the current study, activist intentions are defined as intentions to engage in behaviors to remove barriers to societal resources and human rights for marginalized individuals (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Activist intentions capture one's intentions to engage in behaviors for the purpose of advancing social justice and include behaviors such as boycotting, joining political organizations, distributing information, confronting the police, blocking public areas, and engaging in activities that may lead to arrest (Corning & Myers, 2002; Lee, Smith, & Henry, 2013).

## The Theory of Planned Behavior

While models predicting intentions to engage in activism have been limited (Bergen, 20120; Dono, Webb, & Richardson, 2009; de Leeuw et al., 2015), psychological models predicting behavioral intentions are longstanding (Ajzen, 1991; Skinner, 1984). One theory that holds promise for predicting activist intentions is TPB (Ajzen, 1991). TPB postulates that intentions to engage in a behavior can be attributed to three factors: attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002). TPB has been shown to be effective in modeling behavioral intentions, despite only containing the three aforementioned predictors (Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile 2016; Armitage & Connor, 2002; Godin & Kok, 1996; Mathieson, 1991; Norman & Connor, 2006).

*Attitudes* toward a behavior are conceptualized as our beliefs about the likelihood of a behavior leading to positive or negative outcomes (Ajzen, 1991; Skinner, 1984). The higher the perceived likelihood of a behavior leading to a positive outcome, the more positive the attitude one is likely to have. For instance, "I believe that it is important to act for social justice," would be an example of an *activist attitude* (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84).

*Perceived behavioral control* is also relevant and is the degree to which outcomes of a behavior are perceived to be a product of one's actions (Ajzen, 2002). Self-efficacy (one's perception of the ease of engaging in a behavior) and control beliefs (one's perception that the outcome of a certain behavior is a product of one's actions) both contribute to a sense of perceived behavioral control. Within the TPB model, perceived behavioral control is not a global personality trait; it is limited to the specific behavior in question. Perceived behavioral control is specific to behaviors and contexts and does not encompass one's generalized perception of ability or locus of control (Ajzen, 1991). Someone high in *perceived behavioral control (activism)* would likely endorse the item, "I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others' lives" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84).

*Subjective norms* represent the normative beliefs of important others in one's life and one's motivation to comply with their beliefs. Normative beliefs refer to the perception of how supportive important others in one's life would be toward one engaging in a behavior. Motivation to comply with environmental subjective norms refers to one's desire to obey the wishes of important others for the behavior. Someone

high in *activist subjective norms* would likely endorse the item, "Others around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84).

We develop attitudes about behaviors because we automatically associate behaviors with positive or negative outcomes (Ajzen, 1991). Positive beliefs about a behavior represent the expectation that participation in said behavior will lead to positive outcomes. In the traditional TPB model, more favorable attitudes toward a behavior are predicted to be directly associated with increased intentions to engage in the behavior (Path A1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path A2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002).

In the traditional TPB model, perceived behavioral control is predicted to be associated directly with behavioral intentions (Path B1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path B2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991). Higher perceived behavioral control is directly associated with higher intentions to engage in a behavior because, all else being equal, an individual who feels more efficacious in his or her ability to engage in a behavior will intend to engage in a behavior more often (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1977).

Subjective norms also are hypothesized to be a direct predictor of behavioral intentions in the traditional TPB model (Path C1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path C2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991). This TPB prediction is in line with research demonstrating the strong effect of social environments on behavior (Ball, Jeffery, Abbott, McNaughton, & Crawford, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Leventhal, 1997). For individuals who are more collectivist, subjective norms can be even more important than individual attitudes (Trafimow & Finlay, 1996; Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998). For the more collectively-oriented, the desire to remain in harmony with the group drives intentions to engage in

behaviors that are in-line with group norms (Santor, Messervey, & Kusumakar, 2000). To fully account for differences in behavior across a wide variety of individuals, both individual attitudes and subjective norms need to be included in behavioral models (Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Triandis, 2001).

In the traditional TPB model, attitudes are hypothesized to covary with perceived behavioral control (Path A3; Ajzen, 1991; Wu & Tsai, 2006; Yeşilyurt, Ulaş, & Akan, 2016). Perceived behavioral control and attitudes coexist simultaneously for most individuals. Perceived behavioral control and attitudes coexist because positive outcomes contribute to the development of both (Bandura, 1977; McCready & Long, 1985; Stramel, 2010). When one experiences positive outcomes as a result of engaging in a behavior, both one's attitudes toward the behavior and one's perceived behavioral control toward the behavior will increase.

TPB also predicts an association between attitudes and subjective norms (Path A4 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991). An association between subjective norms and attitudes occurs because environmental attitudes toward a behavior have strong influences on one's attitudes toward a behavior (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). In environments that support specific behaviors, messages that support the benefits of engaging in a behavior are communicated through direct messaging, indirect messaging, and peer observation (Ball et al., 2010). As one increasingly hears messages regarding the benefits of a behavior and witnesses benefits firsthand, one will tend to develop increasingly positive attitudes (Hughes et al., 2006). Additionally, there are also likely social pressures at play that further contribute to the association between subjective norms and attitudes (Quintelier, 2014). In most social settings, to fit in with others, there

is pressure to conform to the attitudes of the environment (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Lastly, attitudes may also contribute to subjective norms through the process of self-selection. Through self-selection, individuals with strong attitudes toward a behavior choose social environments that also hold similar attitudes (Lewis, Gonzalez, & Kaufman, 2011; Quintelier, 2014). As subjective norms and attitudes contribute to each other, they are predicted to covary in the current study (Path A4 [Figure 1, Figure 2]).

In TPB, perceived behavioral control is predicted to be associated with subjective norms (Path B3 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991). In settings with high subjective norms for a behavior, there are opportunities to observe others engaging in a behavior, which leads to higher perceived behavioral control (Bandura, 1977). By observing others, individuals can learn about behavioral processes that lead to positive outcomes, increase these processes for themselves, and boost their own efficacy. Another reason individuals in settings with high subjective norms have higher perceived behavioral control is that these environments support engaging in the behavior, reducing barriers and promoting benefits (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). For example, in settings with high subjective norms for a behavior, engaging in salient behavior could improve one's social standing (Rutland et al., 2005). In addition, those with high perceived behavioral control also likely contribute to the subjective norms of social settings. Those with high perceived behavioral control may serve as educators and role models to others (Denson & Hill, 2010; Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, & Avolio, 2011).

**TPB's Applicability to Activism**

Given that TPB's efficacy in modeling behaviors has been demonstrated repeatedly (Armitage & Connor, 2001; Ajzen, 1991), there is also reason to believe that a TPB model examining activist intentions will fit data well. To date, it appears that the closest application of TPB to activism has been its usage in predicting pro-environmental behaviors (de Leeuw et al., 2015; Kaiser & Scheuthle, 2003). It is evident that the literature on activism is still in its infancy (Fletcher, 2018; Friedman & Ayres, 2013; Spellings, Barber, & Olson 2012). Attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms have been investigated as they relate to activism in qualitative examinations (Bergen, 2012; Fletcher, 2018) and in independent empirical examinations (Armstrong, 2011; Croteau, 2018; Kaysen & Stake, 2011; Swank & Fahs, 2013), but not in SEM. Modeling activist intentions through SEM would provide the benefit of summarizing the interrelationships between the variables in a parsimonious fashion (Weston & Gore, 2006).

Though not yet investigated, there are reasons to believe that *activist attitudes* will be a direct positive predictor of activist intentions (Path A1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path A2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]). Initial examinations of activism have found that conceptualizing social justice and developing beliefs about how the world should be ordered are critical to activist behaviors (Fletcher, 2018). Direct links between activist attitudes and activist behaviors have been discovered as well (Armstrong, 2011; Croteau, 2018; Kaysen & Stake, 2011; Swank & Fahs, 2013). The association between activist attitudes and behaviors likely exists because recognizing societal injustice is critical to furthering one's intentions to engage in a behavior that seeks to disrupt the status quo and make societal systems more equitable (Reason & Davis, 2005).

There are also reasons to believe that *perceived behavioral control (activism)* will be a direct positive predictor of low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions (Path B1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path B2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]). In examining activism, previous researchers have found that two proxies for perceived behavioral control, political efficacy and agentic self-esteem, are associated with activist behaviors for student activists and abortion rights activists, respectively (Bergen, 2012; Kaysen & Stake, 2011). Kaysen and Stake (2011) hypothesize that activists are likely individuals who not only have an awareness of injustice but also feel they can create positive change in their environment. They believe that the presence of both is what leads to the development of activist intentions.

Previous research examining contributing factors to activism also has suggested *activist subjective norms* will be a direct positive predictor of low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions (Path C1 [Figure 1, Figure 2], Path C2 [Figure 1, Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991). Research consistently points to the importance of social supports in promoting activist behaviors (Friedman & Ayres, 2013; Kaysen & Stake, 2011; Swank & Fahs, 2013). Peers, mentors, and role models are frequently cited as essential to sustaining activist intentions and behaviors (Fletcher, 2018; Spellings et al., 2012). It is likely that subjective norms are particularly important to activist intentions because of the potential backlash effects from disapproving individuals (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010; Rudman & Phelan, 2008; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012; Stone, Whitehead, Schmader, & Focella, 2011). Activist behaviors, though often positively received by the marginalized, are often received negatively by privileged stakeholders who benefit from the status quo (Duriez & Soenens, 2009; Moghaddam &

Vuksanovic, 1990; Radkiewicz, 2016). To sustain activist behaviors, in what are oftentimes hostile environments, it is likely that activists have a heightened need for subjective norms conducive to activism.

The current study also seeks to add to the literature on activism by modeling both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions in tandem. Previous empirical inquiries into activist behaviors have viewed activism as a unidimensional construct (Bergen, 2012; Friedman & Ayres, 2013; Fielding, McDonald, & Louis, 2008). However, there is evidence that activism has two constituent factors (Corning & Myers, 2002). In their exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, Corning and Myers (2002) find that activism is a bidimensional construct, with some behaviors being low-risk to the self and some being high-risk to the self. Low-risk behaviors, like signing petitions, do not lead to possible material or bodily harm for activists. High-risk activist behaviors, like blockading buildings, are those that can potentially lead to harm or significant negative consequences for activists. As empirical inquiries often have conflated low-risk activism with high-risk activism, our understanding of activist intentions has been obfuscated unnecessarily. The current study aims to provide precision and clarity to our understanding of activist intentions by examining both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions.

It is hypothesized that low-risk activist intentions will be associated with high-risk activist intentions in the current study (Path G1 [Figure 1, Figure 2]). Engagement in high-risk activist behaviors fluctuates and is dependent upon circumstances (Rutten, 2000). When circumstances are more favorable to high-risk activism, individuals will engage in it more often (Almanzar & Herring, 2004). Thus, it is likely that many

individuals intend to engage in both low-risk activist behaviors and high-risk activist behaviors in the future. They may intend to engage in low-risk activist behaviors when they feel engagement in high-risk activist behaviors would be too personally costly. Regardless, in the current model, this implies an association between low-risk and high-risk activist intentions.

**Extending TPB: Past Behavior and Identity**

Some researchers have found that TPB can explain additional variance in behavioral intentions when additional variables are added to the traditional TPB model (Fekadu & Craft, 2001; Kaiser & Scheuthle, 2003; Rise et al., 2010; Sparks & Guthrie, 1998). *Past behavior*, how often one has engaged in the behavior in the past, is a factor that has been added to complement the traditional TPB model (Ajzen, 1991; Connor & Armitage, 1998; Ouellet & Wood, 1998). When past behavior is incorporated into the TPB model, the paths between it and behavioral intentions remain significant even after accounting for the effects of attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms on behavioral intentions (Conner, Sandberg, & Norman, 2010; Kor & Mullan, 2011; Lavin & Groarke, 2005; Zint, 2002). Indeed, when incorporated into TPB, past behavior is oftentimes the strongest predictor of behavioral intentions (Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Wong & Mullan, 2009).

For these reasons, it also is hypothesized that *past low-risk activist behaviors* and *past high-risk activist behaviors* will be positive predictors of low-risk activist intentions (Path D1[Figure 2], Path E1 [Figure 2]) and high-risk activist intentions (Path D2 [Figure 2], Path E2 [Figure 2]). For individuals who have engaged in past activist behaviors, the

processes that initiate and control activist behaviors have become more habitual, making future intentions more likely (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). As the processes learned from engaging in past behavior are important to engaging in the behavior in the future, incorporating past activist behavior into the TPB model will likely capture much of the variance in activist intentions not accounted for by activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms.

When past behavior has been incorporated into TPB models, past behavior has been found to be associated with attitudes (Path A6 [Figure 2], Path A5 [Figure 2]; Rhodes & Corneya, 2003), perceived behavioral control (Path B5 [Figure 2], Path B4 [Figure 2]; Lavin & Groarke, 2005; Wong & Mullan, 2009), and subjective norms (Path C3 [Figure 2], Path C4 [Figure 2]; Kor & Mullan, 2011; Sheeran, Orbell, Trafimow, 1999). Positive attitudes toward a behavior develop when individuals feel engaging in a behavior will lead to positive outcomes (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, if an individual has engaged in past activist behaviors, positive outcomes are more likely to have occurred for them than for individuals who have not engaged in past activist behaviors. Previous positive outcomes, in turn, lead to the development of positive attitudes. As those with activist attitudes are also more likely to have engaged in past activist behaviors, activist attitudes and past activist behaviors are predicted to covary (Path A6 [Figure 2], Path A5 [Figure 2]; Ajzen, 1991; Armstrong, 2011). Past activist behaviors and perceived behavioral control (activism) also are likely to covary (Path B5 [Figure 2], Path B4 [Figure 2]). Perceived behavioral control (activism) and past activist behaviors are likely to covary because not only does efficacy increase from past behavior, it also contributes to engagement in past behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1977). Lastly, past activist

behaviors are also likely to covary with subjective norms (Path C4 [Figure 2], Path C3 [Figure 2]). Individuals who have engaged in past activist behaviors may seek environments that are conducive to their continued engagement in activism (Lewis et al., 2011). On the other hand, environments that are conducive to activism also have made engaging in past activist behaviors more likely (Bamberg, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2010; Ouellette & Wood, 1998).

*Identity*, the degree to which engaging in a behavior is a performance of one's self-concept, also has been added to complement the traditional TPB model (Rise et al., 2010; Sparks & Guthrie, 1998). Previous research suggests that activist identity is a direct positive predictor of activist intentions (Path F1 [Figure 2], Path F2 [Figure 2]; Sparks & Shephard, 1992). Those who are high in activist identity value being an activist and consider it a core part of how they view themselves and how they want to be viewed by others (Bozionelos & Bennet, 1999; Kumru & Thompson, 2003). Multiple studies examining activism have found that identities relevant to activist causes (e.g., being transgender and engaging in transgender activism) are strong predictors of activist intentions (Bergen, 2012; Friedman & Ayres, 2013; Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; White, 2006). It is theorized that identity is associated with engagement in identity-relevant behaviors because engagement helps to form and maintain a unique sense of self (Bozionelos & Bennet, 1999; Kumru & Thompson, 2003; Rise et al., 2010; Sparks & Guthrie, 1998).

Previous investigations of activism have suggested that past activist behaviors and activist identity play important roles in predicting behavioral intentions (Dono et al., 2010; Jones & Brewster, 2016; Swank, 2012). This previous research suggests that

activist identity is likely a mediator between activist attitudes (Path A7 [Figure 2]), perceived behavioral control (Path B6 [Figure 2]), subjective norms (Path C5 [Figure 2]), past low-risk activist behaviors (Path D4 [Figure 2]), past high-risk activist behaviors (Path E3 [Figure 2]), and low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions, respectively (Foster, 2014; Lindgren, Neighbors, Wiers, Gasser, & Teachman, 2015; Robinson III, 2003). The five aforementioned variables are hypothesized to independently positively predict both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions indirectly through activist identity.

First and foremost, as engagement in activist behaviors is what defines being an activist (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Horton, 2003), it is highly likely that individuals who identify as activists will intend to engage in future low-risk activist behaviors (Path F1 [Figure 2]) and future high-risk activist behaviors (Path F2 [Figure 2]). Secondly, there are also reasons to believe that identity will mediate the relationships TPB variables and past behavior have with activist intentions. As activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, and past activist behaviors all are associated with the development of an activist identity, there is reason to believe in a mediating effect (Fielding et al., 2008; Hahn & Belt, 2004; Hill, Ben Hagai, & Zubriggen, 2018; Stephan, 2009; Tran & Curtin, 2017).

For those high in activist attitudes, a congruent activist identity is important to oneself (Path A7 [Figure 2]). For example, activist attitudes are so important to some disability activists that they hypothetically project that they would refuse a cure for their disability (Hahn & Belt, 2004). For these disability activists, their activist attitudes lead to the maintenance of their disability identity, even in the face of a cure. This suggests

that activist attitudes are likely to be a strong positive predictor of activist identity in the current study.

Perceived behavioral control (activism) also likely has a direct positive effect on activist identity (Path B6 [Figure 2]). In a sample of African American male students, math self-efficacy was associated with the development of a math identity (Briggs, 2014). Briggs' (2014) study bears some parallels with the current study as barriers exist to African Americans developing a math identity (Gainor & Lent, 1998) and barriers exist to the development of an activist identity (Rudman et al., 2012). In both studies, the development of an identity was difficult due to societal stigma, but existing efficacy helped to mitigate the effect of societal stigma. This suggests a direct positive path between perceived behavioral control (activism) and activist identity in the current study (Path B6 [Figure 2]).

Activist subjective norms also likely have a direct positive effect on activist identity (Path C3 [Figure 2]). Individuals repeatedly have cited role models and mentors as critical in solidifying their activist identity (Bergen, 2012; Fletcher, 2018). Activist subjective norms surround individuals with others who feel being an activist is a core component of who they are (Kaysen & Stake, 2011). This consistent positive messaging about activism likely helps to consolidate an activist identity. As an example, women's rights activists in Lebanon view being surrounded and supported by other women's rights activists as critical to creating and maintaining their activist identity (Stephan, 2009).

In addition, both past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors likely have direct positive effects on activist identity (Path D4 [Figure 2], Path

E3 [Figure 2]). In a similar study, not only were past environmental behaviors associated with environmental identity, reminding participants of their past environmental behaviors led to an even stronger relationship with environmental identity (Van der Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2014). This suggests that past behavior has the effect of creating and consolidating one's identity around a behavior. Because individuals create a sense of identity through observing their own behaviors (Strachan, Brawley, Spink, & Glazebrook, 2010; Van der Werff et al., 2014), increased amounts of past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors will likely have direct positive effects on activist identity in the current study (Path D4 [Figure 2], Path E3 [Figure 2]).

**Current Study**

The current study sought to expand the activism literature by testing the viability of two potential behavioral models of activism. The current study examined the fit of the traditional TPB model (Figure 1) and a commitment model that included past activist behaviors and activist identity (Figure 2). In the commitment model, it was hypothesized that activist identity would mediate the relationships between activist attitudes (Path A7 [Figure 2]), perceived behavioral control (Path B6 [Figure 2]), subjective norms (Path C5 [Figure 2]), past low-risk activist behaviors (Path D4 [Figure 2]), past high-risk activist behaviors (Path E3 [Figure 2]), and both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions, respectively.

The goal of the current research was to understand the relative importance of activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, past low-risk activist behaviors, past high-risk activist behaviors, and activist identity to both

low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. The SEM models may provide evidence of a template for a multifaceted intervention to promote activism. This holistic and nuanced approach to understanding activism may help multicultural educators and leaders implement more efficacious efforts to promote activism and social justice.

## Methods

### Participants

Participants were recruited via professional listservs, social media, university classes that offered extra credit for participation, and word of mouth. Participants were recruited from listservs for the Society of Counseling Psychology; the Society of the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race; and the Asian American Psychological Association. Participants also were recruited through Facebook posts from the primary investigator, others who shared the original post, and from a large Facebook group of activists. Inclusion criteria were that participants be over the age of 18 and fluent in English. Potential participants were informed that the online study investigated "social attitudes and behaviors." The study was approved by Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board. Participants were informed that by completing the study, they would be given a vote on how the study would disperse $300 worth of funds allocated for charitable organizations. An initial sample of 511 participants completed the survey, but 128 of the participants (25.05%) were excluded for not answering all three of the validity check questions correctly. Validity check items (See Appendix E) included, "Please select no for this question," "Please select yes for this question," and

"Please select slightly disagree for this question." This resulted in the final sample ($N$ = 383).

Included participants were, on average, 31.40 years of age ($SD$ = 11.94). The sample was 74.9% female, 19.3% male, 1% trans-identifying, 3.1% gender-nonconforming, and 1.6% preferring not to identify. Participants were 45.7% White, 11.5% Black or African American, 17.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, .3% Native American or American Indian, 13.3% Latinx, 8.4% multiracial, 2.9% other race, and .8% preferring not to self-identify. Participants were predominantly straight or heterosexual (70.0%), but there was representation from other sexual orientations (6.3% gay or lesbian, 17.5% bisexual, 5.0% other, and .8% preferring not to answer). Participants were predominantly secular (20.6% agnostic, 15.7% Atheist, and 18.5% spiritual but not religious), but there was representation from the primary monotheistic religions (23.8% Christian, 3.4% Jewish, 2.6% Muslim). Participants' country of residence was predominantly the United States of America (70.8% US Citizen, 3.9% US permanent resident, 1.6% US Visa, .8% undocumented). A substantial number of participants were citizens of other countries (18.5%), a small number of participants (2.6% ) stated that their documentation status was not listed in the survey responses, and a few participants stated that they preferred not to answer the question (1.3% ). The two most common foreign nationalities were Canadian and British. As the majority of participants (63.4%) also identified an annual income lower than $45,000, participants were primarily low-to-middle socio-economic status. Participants were generally well educated (12.8% doctoral degree, 32.4% Master's degree, 29.5% Bachelor's degree, 13.8% some university, 4.2% Associates degree, 6.8% high school or GED, .5% some high school) and working in

some capacity (43.4% full-time, 30.5% part-time, 5.5% self-employed, 1.6% temporarily employed, 15.9% unemployed, 3.1% retired). A large number of participants (41.3%) identified as helping professionals (health educator or community health worker, mental health or marriage and family therapist, probation officer or correctional treatment specialist, rehabilitation counselor, school or career counselor, social and human serviced assistant, social worker, substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselor; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The high percentage of helping professionals in the current study was likely a product of the settings where many of the participants were recruited (e.g., Society of Counseling Psychology list-serve).

## Measures

**Activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms.** Activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms were assessed using the social justice attitudes, social justice perceived behavioral control, and social justice subjective norms subscales from the Social Justice Scale, respectively (See Appendix D; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). The Social Justice Scale was intended to assess factors that might be related to social justice behaviors.

To ascertain the psychometric properties of the Social Justice Scale, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) collected a sample of 276 graduate and undergraduate students (82% female). Their sample was 51% White, 21% Black, 10% Latinx, 6% Asian-American, 2% Middle-Eastern, and 4% multiracial. Torres-Harding et al. (2012) established construct validity by correlating the overall Social Justice Scale and each of

its subscales with other scales purported to be measuring similar, or dissimilar, constructs.

In support of construct validity, the overall Social Justice Scale was appropriately correlated (i.e., positively correlated for related constructs and negatively for opposing constructs) with other scales. It was positively correlated with one's interest in public policy making, public interest, civic duty, social justice, self-sacrifice, and compassion (Perry Public Service Motivation Scale; Perry, 1996). The overall Social Justice Scale was also negatively correlated with the perception that the world is fair, that people get what they deserve in life, and that people are responsible for their own fortune or misfortune (Global Belief in a Just World Scale; Lipkus, 1991). Further evidence supporting the construct validity of the Social Justice Scale were its negative correlations to both symbolic racism (Symbolic Racism Scale; Henry & Sears, 2000) and neosexism (Neosexism Scale, Tougas, Brown, Beaton, and Joly, 1995). As addressing racism and sexism are both core components of social justice (Hackman, 2005), the negative correlation between them and the Social Justice Scale provided evidence in support of the scale's construct validity.

*Activist attitudes* were assessed using the social justice attitudes subscale of the Social Justice Scale (See Appendix D; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). An example of an activist attitude item was, "I believe it is important to act for social justice" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84). Items were answered on a 1-7 Likert type scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 4 = *neutral*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). In their sample, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) observed high Cronbach's alpha for activist attitudes ($\alpha = .95$). Substantiating the construct validity of the activist attitudes subscale were its positive correlation with *Perry*

Public Service Motivation Scale ($r$ = .29; Perry, 1996) and its negative correlations with the Global Belief in a Just World Scale ($r$ = -.28; Lipkus, 1991), the Symbolic Racism Scale ($r$ = -.28; Henry & Sears, 2002), and the Neosexism Scale ($r$ = -.44; Tougas et al., 1995). In the current sample, activist attitudes also had high internal consistency ($\alpha$ = .93).

*Perceived behavioral control (activism)* was assessed using the social justice perceived behavioral control subscale of the Social Justice Scale (See Appendix D; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Items were answered on a 1-7 Likert type scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 4 = *neutral*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). An example of an item capturing the self-efficacy component of perceived behavioral control (activism) item was, "I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84). An example of an item capturing the control beliefs component of perceived behavioral control (activism) was, "I am certain if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p.84). In their sample, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) found Cronbach's alpha for perceived behavioral control (activism) to be high ($\alpha$ = .84). As with activist attitudes, evidence of the construct validity of perceived behavioral control (activism) were its positive correlation with the Perry Public Service Motivation scale ($r$ = .39; Perry, 1996) and its negative correlations with the Global Belief in a Just World Scale ($r$ = -.24; Lipkus, 1991), the Symbolic Racism Scale ($r$ = -.26 Henry & Sears, 2002), and the Neosexism Scale ($r$ = -.33; Tougas et al., 1995). In the current sample, Cronbach's alpha was high ($\alpha$ = .84).

*Activist subjective norms* were assessed using the social justice subjective norms subscale of the Social Justice Scale (See Appendix D; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Items were answered on a 1-7 Likert type scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 4 = *neutral*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). An example of an activist subjective norms item was, "Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices" (Torres-Harding et al., 2012, p. 84). In their sample, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) found Cronbach's alpha for activist subjective norms to be high (α = .82). Evidence of the construct validity of activist subjective norms were its positive correlation with the Perry Public Service Motivation scale (*r* = .31; Perry, 1996) and negative correlations with the Global Belief in a Just World Scale (*r* = -.16; Lipkus, 1991), the Symbolic Racism Scale (*r* = -.19; Henry & Sears, 2002), and the Neosexism Scale (*r* = -.25; Tougas et al., 1995). In the current sample, Cronbach's alpha for activist subjective norms was also high (α = .85).

**Activist identity**. Activist identity was assessed using the Activist Identity Scale (See Appendix B; Klar & Kasser, 2009). The scale consisted of four items assessed on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items included, "Being an activist is central to who I am," "I identify myself as an activist," "People who know me well would call me an activist," and "Being an activist is an important reflection of who I am" (Klar & Kassar, 2009, p. 775). In their sample of 344 U.S. Midwestern college students, Klar and Kasser (2009) found internal consistency reliability for the scale to be high (α = .96). Internal consistency reliability was also high in the current study (α = .97). In support of construct validity was that activist identity

was found to correlate highly with the overall Activism Orientation Scale ($r$ = .71; Klar & Kasser, 2009).

**Past low-risk and past high-risk activist behaviors.** Past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors were assessed using a short version of the Activism Orientation Scale originally developed by Corning and Myers (2002) (See Appendix C; Klar & Kasser, 2009). To assess past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors, participants were asked to report to what degree they engaged in listed activist behaviors in the past year (0 = *not at all*, 3 = *a lot*). There were 15 items assessing past low-risk activist behaviors and 7 items assessing past high-risk activist behaviors. Past low-risk activist behaviors were considered of little danger to the self (e.g., participating in the electoral process, signing a petition for a political cause, participating in discussion groups). Past high-risk activist behaviors were defined as active, dangerous, and unconventional (e.g., engage in activities that might lead to an arrest, blocking access to public property, risking serious injury).

When originally establishing the validity of the original *Activism Orientation Scale*, Corning and Meyers (2002) sampled 52 students from a student labor union, 20 women from women's studies majors, 59 students majoring in sociology, and 89 students from a communication skills course. Participants were drawn from a large U.S. Midwestern state university and a mid-size Midwestern Catholic university. Students were specifically sampled from settings that were presumably higher in past activist behaviors (e.g., a student labor union) than settings presumably lower in past activist behaviors (e.g., communication skills course). In their sample, Corning and Myers (2002) found internal consistencies for the overall scale ($\alpha$ = .96), the past low-risk

activist behaviors subscale (α = .96), and the past high-risk activist behaviors subscale (α = .93) to be high. In the current sample, both past low-risk activist behaviors (α = .99) and past high-risk activist behaviors (α = .99) were found to have high internal consistency reliability.

Past low-risk activist behaviors (*r* = .34), but not past high-risk activist behaviors, were correlated with the perception that women as a collective have less power and resources than men (Relative Deprivation Scale; Corning, 2000). In their sample of women (*n* = 142), the correlation between relative deprivation and past low-risk activist behaviors suggested that the Activism Orientation Scale was associated with perceptions of group-based inequalities. As activism was conceptualized as collective problem-solving to address issues of societal injustice (Corning & Myers, 2002), the scale being correlated with the Relative Deprivation Scale supports the construct validity of the past low-risk activist behaviors subscale among women. The lack of an association between past high-risk activist behaviors and relative deprivation suggests that women who engage in high-risk activist activities may not be motivated by perceptions of group inequality.

Construct validity was supported by the fact that the perception that one has the competence to change political systems that oppress was associated with both past low-risk activist behaviors (*r* = .43) and high-risk activist behaviors (*r* = .44; Political Locus of Control; Paulhus, 1983). As beliefs about efficacy are linked with behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1977), this association helped to reinforce that the past low-risk activist behavior and past high-risk activist behavior subscales did assess behaviors associated with changing systems of power and oppression. In further support of construct validity,

past low-risk activist behaviors ($r$ = .56) and past high-risk activist behaviors ($r$ = .42) also were associated with past feminist activist behaviors (Collective Behavior on Behalf of Women; Foster & Matheson, 1995). This association between previously established measures of activist behaviors and both past low risk-activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors helped to validate the construct validity of the two scales.

Corning & Myers (2002) assessed criterion-related validity by comparing mean differences on the Activism Orientation Scale scores across groups of university students (Corning & Myers, 2002). As was expected, individuals in the student labor union sample scored the highest ($M_{unionoverall}$ = 72.31, $M_{unionlow}$, = 62.98, $M_{unionhigh}$ = 9.33), followed by Women's Studies majors ($M_{WSoverall}$ = 55.04, $M_{WSlow}$, = 50.33, $M_{WShigh}$ = 4.71), Sociology majors ($M_{SMoverall}$ = 48.81, $M_{SMlow}$, = 45.41, $M_{SMhigh}$ = 3.40), and students in a communication skills course ($M_{CSoverall}$ = 35.54, $M_{CSlow}$, = 33.25, $M_{CShigh}$ = 2.30). As labor unions form for the purpose of bringing about structural change (Albert, 2014; Kelloway & Barling, 1993), it was expected that they would score the highest on the *Activism Orientation Scale*. Group mean differences in the expected direction helped support the criterion validity of the Activism Orientation Scale.

**Low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions**. Items for low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were identical to the ones used for past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors, respectively. However, to assess activist intentions, participants were asked to report how likely they were to engage in listed activist behaviors in the future (0 = *extremely unlikely*, 3 = *extremely likely*). Just as with past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors, low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions also drew 22 items

and 7 items, respectively, from the abbreviated Activism Orientation Scale (See Appendix C; Klar & Kassar, 2009). In the current sample, internal consistency reliability was high for low-risk activist intentions ($\alpha = .95$) and high-risk activist intentions ($\alpha = .93$).

**Analytic Approach**

Three validity items (See Appendix E) were included amongst survey items to assess participant commitment to responding to the questions. To be included in the final analyses, participants had to respond to all three validity questions correctly. In preliminary analyses, the effects of demographic variables on the criterion variables of the study were assessed. To conduct descriptive analyses, sum scores were created for low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. Correlational analyses, *t*-tests, and ANOVA were used to assess the relationships between demographic variables and the study variables.

In the primary analyses, the proposed models were tested with SEM using maximum likelihood robust standard error estimation (Lei & Wu, 2007; Martens & Haase, 2006; Weston & Gore, 2006). Four goodness-of-fit indices were used to evaluate the two SEM models: chi-squared ($p > .05$), comparative fit index (CFI; .95 or greater), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; .06 or less), and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR; .08 or less; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Univariate normality for each predictor was examined by inspecting the skewness of each predictor (Weston & Gore, 2006). Missing data were addressed using full information maximum

likelihood estimation (Enders & Bandalos, 2009). Analyses were conducted using MPLUS statistical software (Muthén & Muthén, 1998).

Before conducting SEM analyses, item parceling procedures were followed to create three parcels for each of the latent factors (Matsunaga, 2008). Activist identity and activist subjective norms were excluded from the item parceling as they only contained four items each. Items were randomly assigned to each of the three parcels per Matsunaga's (2008) recommendation. Random assignment of items to parcels was recommended by Matsunaga (2008) because it is an item assignment algorithm that is not affected by the specificity of a given scale or sample. In instances where there were markedly uneven distributions of items to parcels, items were randomly assigned to parcels again. High coefficient omegas for activist attitudes ($\omega$ = .87), perceived behavioral control activism (activism; $\omega$ = .77), past low-risk activist behaviors ($\omega$ = .90), past high-risk activist behaviors ($\omega$ = .82), low-risk activist intentions ($\omega$ = .92), and high-risk activist intentions ($\omega$ = .94) suggested that the item parceling processes used in the current study led to latent variables with high internal reliability (Graham, 2006).

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

**Data screening.** In the final sample ($N$ = 383), there was relatively little missing data. There were no missing survey responses for activist identity, and 99.22% of the data were present for the latent variables of activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, past low activist behaviors, past high-risk activist behaviors, low-risk activist intentions, and high-risk activist intentions. Results

of missing data analyses suggested the appropriateness of full-information maximum estimation for missing data (Allen, 2003).

Many of the study variables did not appear to approximate a normal distribution. Activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, and activist identity were negatively skewed (skewness indices from -.89 to -3.16; Raynor, Best, & Matthews, 1995). Past low-risk activist behaviors, past high-risk activist behaviors, and high-risk activist intentions were positively skewed (skewness indices from .58 to 2.30). Only low-risk activist intentions and activist identity approximated a normal distribution (skewness indices of -.14 and -.43, respectively). Though multivariate normality itself was not assessed directly, multivariate normality was questionable as many of the study variables in the current study were not normally distributed at the univariate level. To protect against possible violations of non-normality and non-independence, maximum likelihood with robust standard errors was used in the current study (MLR; Hox, Maas, Brinkhuis, 2010).

**Descriptive statistics.** For the continuous variable, age, correlations were calculated between it and the criterion variables. Age was not correlated with either low-risk activist intentions ($r$ = -.01, $p$ = .82) or high-risk activist intentions ($r$ = -.08, $p$ = .10).

Table 1

*Effect of Demographic Variables on Criterion Variables*

| Demographic Variable | *n* | $M_{low}$ | $SD_{low}$ | Low-Risk Activist Intentions: Significance Test$_{low}$ | Low-Risk Activist Intentions: Effect Size$_{low}$ | $M_{high}$ | $SD_{high}$ | High-Risk Activist Intentions: Significance Test$_{high}$ | High-Risk Activist Intentions: Effect Size$_{high}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender[a] | | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 73 | 6.63 | 2.29 | | | 4.32 | 1.80 | | |
| Women | 285 | 7.75 | 2.30 | | | 4.67 | 2.02 | | |
| Transgender | 4 | 9.35 | 0.26 | $t(359) = -3.74,\ p = .61$ | $d = .43$ | 8.54 | 2.38 | $t(359) = -1.36, p = .15$ | $d = .18$ |
| Nonconforming | 12 | 9.66 | 1.68 | | | 7.47 | 2.29 | | |
| Not listed | 6 | 8.46 | 1.31 | | | 5.97 | 1.92 | | |
| Race/Ethnicity[b] | | | | | | | | | |
| White | 175 | 7.40 | 2.35 | | | 4.54 | 2.04 | | |
| Black | 44 | 8.18 | 1.87 | | | 4.77 | 2.08 | | |
| Asian | 64 | 7.49 | 2.32 | | | 4.53 | 1.88 | | |
| Latinx | 50 | 7.73 | 2.52 | $F(4.363) = 1.44, p = .22$ | $\eta^2 = .02$ | 5.13 | 2.12 | $F(4.363) = 1.44, p = .15$ | $\eta^2 = .02$ |
| Bi/multiracial | 32 | 8.10 | 2.48 | | | 5.34 | 2.47 | | |
| Native American | 1 | 8.07 | N/A | | | 8.17 | N/A | | |
| Not listed | 11 | 8.19 | 2.55 | | | 5.52 | 2.14 | | |
| Prefer not to answer | 3 | 6.41 | 1.96 | | | 5.28 | 3.38 | | |
| Sexual Orientation | | | | | | | | | |
| Heterosexual | 267 | 7.20 | 2.35 | $t(379) = -5.57, p < .01$ | $d = .65$ | 4.35 | 1.85 | $t(379) = -5.98, p < .01$ | $d = .64$ |
| LGBT+ | 111 | 8.61 | 1.99 | | | 5.69 | 2.32 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religion | | | | | | | | | |
| Agnostic/Atheist | 138 | 7.80 | 2.30 | | | 4.80 | 2.02 | | |
| Religious | 172 | 7.15 | 2.36 | $F(2.380) = 8.74$, $p < .01$ | $\eta^2 = .04$ | 4.50 | 1.98 | $F(2.380) = 3.64$, $p = .03$ | $\eta^2 = .02$ |
| Spiritual | 70 | 8.45 | 2.07 | | | 5.28 | 2.41 | | |
| Documentation Status[c] | | | | | | | | | |
| American | 269 | 8.02 | 2.29 | | | 4.95 | 2.12 | | |
| Non-American | 71 | 6.55 | 2.07 | | | 4.30 | 2.03 | | |
| US resident | 15 | 6.97 | 2.24 | | | 4.52 | 1.90 | | |
| US VISA | 6 | 6.90 | 2.57 | $t(340) = 4.93$, $p < .01$ | $d = .67$ | 4.17 | 1.83 | $t(340) = 2.34$, p =.16 | $d = .31$ |
| Undocumented | 3 | 8.24 | 2.69 | | | 5.11 | 1.58 | | |
| Not listed | 10 | 7.48 | 2.54 | | | 4.27 | 2.21 | | |
| Prefer not to answer | 5 | 4.97 | 1.16 | | | 3.07 | 0.15 | | |
| Income | | | | | | | | | |
| < $15k | 112 | 7.24 | 2.45 | | | 4.73 | 2.32 | | |
| $15k < I < $30k | 86 | 8.00 | 2.11 | $F(3.354) = 1.95$, $p = .12$ | $\eta^2 = .02$ | 4.97 | 2.15 | $F(3.354) = .32$, $p = .81$ | $\eta^2 = .00$ |
| $30k < I < $60k | 80 | 7.58 | 2.21 | | | 4.71 | 1.95 | | |
| > $60,000 | 77 | 7.81 | 2.53 | | | 4.69 | 1.98 | | |
| Employment Status[d] | | | | | | | | | |
| Full-time | 164 | 7.80 | 2.31 | | | 4.83 | 2.08 | | |
| Part-time | 116 | 7.56 | 2.42 | | | 4.77 | 2.14 | | |
| Unemployed | 61 | 7.21 | 2.27 | $F(2.341) = 1.45$, $p = .24$ | $\eta^2 = .01$ | 4.57 | 2.00 | $F(2.341) = .34$, $p = .72$ | $\eta^2 = .00$ |
| Self-employed | 21 | 8.11 | 2.17 | | | 4.82 | 2.08 | | |
| Temp employed | 6 | 7.65 | 1.98 | | | 5.17 | 3.04 | | |
| Retired | 12 | 7.16 | 2.63 | | | 4.12 | 2.02 | | |
| Helping Pro Status | | | | | | | | | |
| Helping pro | 157 | 8.14 | 2.10 | $t(381) = 3.67$, $p < .01$ | $d = .39$ | 4.69 | 1.95 | $t(381) = -.51$, $p = .61$ | $d = .05$ |
| Non-helping pro | 223 | 7.26 | 2.43 | | | 4.80 | 2.19 | | |

[a] Transgender, gender-non-conforming, those who had an unlisted gender identity, and those who preferred not to answer were not included in analyses due to insufficient numbers
[b] American Indian/Native American, those with an unlisted race/ethnicity, and those who preferred not to identify were not included in analyses due to insufficient numbers
[c] Only American citizens and foreign citizens were included in analysis. Permanent residents, those on a visa, undocumented individuals, and those who preferred not to answer were not included in analyses due to insufficient numbers
[d] Those who identified as self-employed, temporarily employed, and retired were not included in analyses due to insufficient numbers

*T*-tests indicated that heterosexual individuals were, on average, significantly lower than LGBT+ individuals in both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. ANOVA revealed religion had a statistically significant effect on both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. Bonferroni post-hoc analyses revealed that those who endorsed any organized religion were, on average, significantly lower than both agnostics/atheists and those who were spiritual but not religious for low-risk activist intentions. Those who endorsed any religion were also, on average, significantly lower than those who were spiritual but not religious for high-risk activist intentions.

## Primary Analyses

**Measurement and structural models.** The measurement model was a good fit for the traditional TPB model (CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04, $\chi^2(94) = 190.76$, $p < .01$) and the commitment model (CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04, $\chi^2(271) = 517.45$, $p < .01$). All standardized factor loadings were significant for both models ($p < .01$) and ranged from .70 to .98. After establishing the measurement models for both the traditional TPB model (Figure 1) and the commitment model (Figure 2), the structural models were examined by specifying the paths among the latent variables. Results indicated a good fit for the structural models to the data for both the traditional TPB model (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(120) = 3760.62$, $p < .01$) and the commitment model (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(325) = 7848.07$, $p < .01$).

Table 2

*Intercorrelations Among Study Variables*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Activist Attitudes | - | 0.44** | 0.37** | 0.34** | 0.23** | 0.13** | 0.18** | 0.06** |
| 2. Perceived Behavioral Control (Activism) | | - | 0.62** | 0.31** | 0.15** | 0.76** | 0.25** | 0.09** |
| 3. Activist Subjective Norms | | | - | 0.23** | 0.03 | 0.64** | 0.19** | 0.03 |
| 4. Low-Risk Activist Intentions | | | | - | 0.36** | 0.86** | 0.47** | 0.21** |
| 5. High-risk Activist Intentions | | | | | - | 0.54** | 0.3** | 0.27** |
| 6. Activist Identity | | | | | | - | 0.8** | 0.33** |
| 7. Past Low-Risk Activist Behaviors | | | | | | | - | 0.25** |
| 8. Past High-Risk Activist Behaviors | | | | | | | | - |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

**Variance explained.** The traditional TPB model (Figure 1) accounted for 26.5% of the variance in low-risk activist intentions and 11.2% of the variance in high-risk activist intentions. The commitment model (Figure 2) accounted for 54.6% of the variance in activist identity, 78.9% of the variance in low-risk activist intentions, and 58.9% of the variance in high-risk activist intentions.

**Direct relations of TPB factors and past activist behaviors to activist intentions.** It should be noted that because the study was cross-sectional, the directionality of the paths between specified variables could not be established. Hypothesized paths were based on current theory, but longitudinal studies are needed to establish path directionality. For the traditional TPB model, paths were significant and positive between activist attitudes and both low-risk activist intentions (Path A1[Figure 1], $\beta = .25$, $p < .01$) and high-risk activist intentions (Path A2 [Figure 1], $\beta = .20$, $p < .01$). Paths were also significant and positive between perceived behavioral control (activism) and both low-risk activist intentions (Path B1 [Figure 1], $\beta = .35$, $p < .01$) and high-risk

activist intentions (Path B2 [Figure 1], $\beta$ = .25, $p$ < .01). The path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions was not significant (Path C1 [Figure 1], $\beta$ = -.06, $p$ = .35). The path between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions was significant and negative (Path C2 [Figure 1], $\beta$ = -.22, $p$ < .01).

Despite the fact that Pearson correlations between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions were not significant ($r$ = .03, $p$ = .55), the path between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions in the traditional TPB model (Path C2 [Figure 1]) was significant and negative ($\beta$ = -.22, $p$ < .01). This negative path between the activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions, despite the lack of a significant negative correlation between the two, suggested the possibility of a suppression effect (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood; Tzelgov & Hennik, 1991). Activist subjective norms may have functioned as a suppressor variable and strengthened the influence of perceived behavioral control (activism) on high-risk activist intentions. There was a large association between perceived behavioral control (activism) and activist subjective norms ($\beta$ = .62, $p$ < .01) which suggested possible issues of multicollinearity (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004). As Pearson correlations did not indicate a significant and negative path between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions was likely, it is possible that the unexpected result was a product of multicollinearity and/or suppression effects (Kraha, Turner, Nimon, Zientek, & Henson, 2012).

In the commitment model, the direct effects of both activist attitudes (Path A1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .07, $p$ = .10; Path A2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .07, $p$ = .14) and perceived behavioral control (activism; Path B1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .09, $p$ = .09; Path B2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .05, $p$ =

.44) on low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were no longer significant. For activist subjective norms, similar to the traditional TPB model, the path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions was not significant (Path C1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = -.04, $p$ = .47). Similar to the results of the traditional TPB model, the path between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions was significant and negative again (Path C2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = -.14, $p$ = .02). In the commitment model, the direct effects of past low-risk activist behaviors (Path D1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .80, $p$ < .01; Path D2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .17, $p$ = .03) and high-risk activist behaviors (Path E1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = -.14, $p$ < .01; Path E2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .54, $p$ < .01) on low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were significant and mostly positive. One notable exception was that the path from past high-risk activist behaviors to low-risk activist intentions was negative (Path E1 [Figure 2]). Activist identity was a significant predictor of both low-risk activist intentions (Path F1 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .15, $p$ = .02) and high-risk activist intentions (Path F2 [Figure 2], $\beta$ = .13, $p$ = .02).

**Indirect relations of TPB factors and past activist behaviors to activist intentions through activist identity in the commitment model.** Five out of the 10 indirect effects had a 95% CI that excluded zero, signifying statistically significant effects at $p$ < .05. Activist identity completely mediated the effect of both activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) on low-risk activist intentions. As the direct effect of past low-risk activist behaviors on low-risk activist intentions was still present after introducing the mediator, activist identity only partially mediated the effect of past low-risk activist behaviors on low-risk activist intentions.

Table 3

*Results of Mediation Model and Statistical Significance of its Mediated Effects in Relation to Low-risk Activist Intentions and High-risk Activist Intentions*

| Predictor | Mediator Variable(s) | Criterion | β (Standardized Path Coefficient) | Mean Indirect Effect (β)[a] | SE of β[a] | 95% CI of Indirect Relation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AA →** | **activist identity →** | **AILR** | **0.03** | **0.04** | **0.02** | **[.00, .07]** |
| AA → | activist identity → | AIHR | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.02 | [-.01, .06] |
| **PBC →** | **activist identity →** | **AILR** | **0.03** | **0.03** | **0.01** | **[.00, .05]** |
| **PBC →** | **activist identity →** | **AIHR** | **0.02** | **0.02** | **0.01** | **[.00, .04]** |
| SN → | activist identity → | AILR | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | [-.01, .01] |
| SN → | activist identity → | AIHR | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | [-.01, .01] |
| **PBLR →** | **activist identity →** | **AILR** | **0.08** | **0.08** | **0.04** | **[.01, .15]** |
| **PBLR →** | **activist identity →** | **AIHR** | **0.07** | **0.07** | **0.03** | **[.01, .12]** |
| PBHR → | activist identity → | AILR | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0.01 | [-.04, .01] |
| PBHR → | activist identity → | AIHR | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0.01 | [-.03, .01] |

*Note.* AA = activist attitudes, PBC = perceived behavioral control (activism), SN = activist subjective norms, PBLR = past low-risk activist behaviors, PBHR = past high-risk activist behaviors, AILR = low-risk activist intentions, AIHR = high-risk activist intentions.
[a]These values are based on unstandardized path coefficients. The mean indirect effects whose 95% confidence intervals (CIs) do not contain zero are in boldface and highlighted with an asterisk to denote a significance level at $p < .05$.

**Post-hoc analyses.** In the commitment model, the beta weights for the path between past low-risk activist behaviors and low-risk activist intentions was large (Path D1 [Figure 2]; $\beta = .80$, $p < .01$). Similarly, the beta weights for the path between past high-risk activist behaviors and high-risk activist intentions was large as well (Path E2 [Figure 2]; $\beta = .55$, $p < .01$). Due to the strong influence of past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors on low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions, respectively, a separate SEM model was conducted that only assessed the impact of past low-risk activist behaviors and high-risk activist behaviors on low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. Results for this *past behavior model* indicated a largely good fit for this post-hoc structural model to the data

(CFI = .97; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .02; $\chi^2(48) = 156.46$, $p < .01$). The RMSEA of the past behavior model was higher than the cutoff criteria for good fitting SEM models (RMSEA < .06; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The past behavior model accounted for a similar amount of the variance in low-risk activist intentions (76.1%) and high-risk activist intentions (56.3%) to the commitment model (78.9% and 58.9%, respectively). This lack of a substantial increase in variance accounted for by the commitment model, in comparison to the simplistic post-hoc model mentioned above, lead to questions about the utility and practicality of the commitment model.

As past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors had such significant associations with low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions, respectively, past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors also were incorporated into the traditional TPB model as covariates in another post-hoc analysis. Activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, low-risk activist intentions, and high-risk activist intentions were regressed onto past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors in the *past behavior TPB model*. Results indicated a good fit for the past behavior TPB model (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(127) = 217.18$, $p < .01$). The past behavior TPB model accounted for more variance in low-risk activist intentions (78.1%) and high-risk activist intentions (58.2%) than the traditional TPB model (26.5% and 11.2%, respectively). Similar to the commitment model, the past behavior TPB model only explained slightly more variance in low-risk activist intentions (78.1%) and high-risk activist intentions (58.2%) than the past behavior model (76.1% and 56.3%, respectively). The past

behavior TPB model also accounted for variance in activist attitudes (13.5%), perceived behavioral control (activism; 15.3%), and activist subjective norms (6.5%).

In the past behavior TPB model, paths between past low-risk activist behaviors and activist attitudes ($\beta$ = .38, $p$ < .01), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta$ = .53, $p$ < .01), activist subjective norms ($\beta$ = .52, $p$ < .01), low-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .90, $p$ < .01), and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .22, $p$ < .01) were all significant. Paths between past high-risk activist behaviors and activist attitudes ($\beta$ = -.12, $p$ = .25), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta$ = -.17, $p$ = .19), and activist subjective norms ($\beta$ = -.37, $p$ = .06) were all not significant. Paths between past high-risk activist behaviors and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = -.22, $p$ < .01) and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .73, $p$ < .01) were significant. Despite the addition of past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors as covariates, the path between activist attitudes and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .10, $p$ = .03) and the path between perceived behavioral control (activism) and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .12, $p$ = .03) remained significant. The path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = -.04, $p$ = .52) remained not significant. The paths between activist attitudes and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .10, $p$ = .03) and activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = -.14, $p$ = .02) were significant. The path between perceived behavioral control (activism) and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta$ = .08, $p$ = .25) was no longer significant. In sum, the past behavior TPB model accounted for more variance in low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions than the traditional TPB model while also explaining some variance in activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms. Similar to the traditional TPB model, the effects of activist

attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) on low-risk activist intentions remained significant when past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors were added as covariates. The effect of activist attitudes, but not perceived behavioral control (activism), on high-risk activist intentions also remained significant when past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors were added.

**Covariate analysis.** In addition to primary study analyses, a *covariate model* also was examined. In the covariate SEM analysis, sexual orientation and religious affiliation were entered as covariates. Sexual orientation and religious affiliation were included because they were significantly associated with both criterion variables. The two demographic variables, because they were categorical, were dummy coded. Helping professional status and documentation status were not included as covariates because they only were associated with one of the criterion variables (low-risk activist intentions).

Activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, low-risk activist intentions, and high-risk activist intentions were regressed onto sexual orientation and religious affiliation in the covariate model. Results indicated a good fit for the covariate SEM model to the data (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .04; $\chi^2(127) = 217.18$, $p < .01$). The covariate SEM model accounted for more variance in low-risk activist intentions (29.7%) and high-risk activist intentions (18.7%) than the traditional TPB model (26.5% and 11.2%, respectively). Additionally, the covariate SEM analysis also accounted for variance in activist attitudes (6.4%), perceived behavioral control (activism; 5.4%), and activist subjective norms (2.4%).

Paths between sexual orientation and activist attitudes ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta = .16$, $p < .01$), activist subjective norms ($\beta =$

.15, $p < .01$), low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$), and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$) were all significant. The paths between the agnostic/atheist – religious dummy variable and activist attitudes ($\beta = .10$, $p = .07$), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta = .06$, $p = .33$), activist subjective norms ($\beta = .01$, $p = .92$), low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .02$, $p = .62$), and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .52$) were all not significant. The paths between the spiritual but not religious – religious dummy variable and activist attitudes ($\beta = .16$, $p < .01$), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta = .16$, $p = .01$), low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .10$, $p = .04$) were all significant. The paths between the spiritual but not religious – religious dummy variable and subjective norms ($\beta = .00$, $p = .99$) and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .04$, $p = .49$) were both not significant. Similar to the traditional TPB model, the path between activist attitudes and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .22$, $p = .03$) and the path between perceived behavioral control (activism) and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$) remained significant after the addition of sexual orientation and religious affiliation dummy variables. The path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions ($\beta = -.06$, $p = .36$) remained nonsignificant. The paths between activist attitudes and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), perceived behavioral control (activism; $\beta = .22$, $p = .02$) and high-risk activist intentions, and activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .01$) were all significant. In sum, the relationships between activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, and the criterion variables that were found in the traditional TPB model all remained significant when sexual orientation and religious affiliation dummy variables were added to the covariate model.

Table 4

*Fit Indices of Examined Structural Models*

| Model | Variance accounted for in low-risk activist intentions | Variance accounted for in high-risk activist intentions | RMSEA | CFI | SRMR | Chi-Squared | AIC | BIC | Sample-Size Adjusted BIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional TPB Model | 26.50% | 11.20% | .05 | .97 | .04 | $p < .01$ | 12383.48 | 12612.46 | 12428.46 |
| Commitment Model | 78.90% | 58.90% | .05 | .97 | .04 | $p < .01$ | 18772.59 | 19191.08 | 18854.76 |
| Past Behavior Model[a] | 76.10% | 56.30% | .08 | .97 | .02 | $p < .01$ | 5571.88 | 5737.7 | 5604.44 |
| Past Behavior TPB Model[b] | 78.10% | 58.20% | .05 | .96 | .04 | $p < .01$ | 14765.57 | 15109.05 | 14833.02 |
| Covariate Model[c] | 29.70% | 18.70% | .04 | .98 | .04 | $p < .01$ | 12095.6 | 12382.27 | 12150.66 |

[a]Model with only past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors as predictors

[b]Model where past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors were added as covariates to the traditional TPB model

[c]Model where sexual orientation and religious affiliation variables were added as covariates to the traditional TPB model

Fit indices for the structural models were largely within the cutoff criteria outlined by Hu and Bentler (1999). The RMSEA of the past behavior model (RMSEA = .08) was a notable exception as it exceeded cutoff criteria (RMSEA < .06). To compare models, AIC, BIC, and sample-adjusted BIC were utilized. Lower values for AIC, BIC, and sample-adjusted BIC indicate an optimal balance between model fit and complexity and are the recommended models for selection (Lin, Huang, & Weng, 2017). From the structural models that met all of the criteria for model fit, the covariate model contained the lowest values for AIC, BIC, and sample-adjusted BIC and was selected as the final model in the current study.

## Discussion

The current study makes important contributions to the literature on activism and social justice. Until now, few structural models of activist intentions have been examined (de Leeuw et al., 2015; Fielding et al., 2008). The lack of structural models examining activist intentions leaves multicultural educators without a parsimonious understanding of the interrelationships between activist intentions and their contributing factors (Weston & Gore, 2006). Adding to the general lack of understanding of activism is that many previous studies also have viewed activist intentions as a unidimensional construct when it actually consists of low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions (Corning & Myers, 2002).

In the current study, TPB served as a template for understanding low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Two structural models were tested to assess their fit to the data. In the traditional TPB model, low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were regressed onto activist attitudes,

perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms. In the commitment model, past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors were added as predictors and activist identity was added as a mediator.

The results for the measurement model and structural model for the traditional TPB model were consistent with previous research suggesting that activism may be a bidimensional construct consisting of low-risk components and high-risk components (Corning & Myers, 2002; Klar & Kasser, 2009). Despite the fact that low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were treated as different factors in the current study, the measurement model was a good fit to the data and contained no cross-loadings between low-risk activist intention items and high-risk activist intention items. Further reinforcing the uniqueness of the two constructs was that the paths and loadings between TPB factors and low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions were quite different. The bidimensionality finding is important to the extant activism literature because it only has been replicated in one prior study to date (Klar & Kasser, 2009). Given the replication crisis in psychology (Maxwell, Lau, & Howard, 2015), corroborating findings from previous studies should not be understated. Future research should continue to view activism as a bidimensional construct.

As expected, in the traditional TPB model, most of the paths between the predictor variables and the criterion variables were positive and significant. Both activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) were predictive of low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions. It should be noted, however, that activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) were stronger predictors of low-risk activist intentions than high-risk activist intentions. This finding suggests that other

factors not included in the traditional TPB model may be important to the development of high-risk activist intentions. As high-risk activist behaviors are much more likely to lead to negative consequences (Corning & Myers, 2002), it is possible that factors not present in the traditional TPB model, such as risk-aversion (Eckel & Grossman, 2008; Thaler, Tversky, Kahneman, Schwartz, 1997), may be important in predicting high-risk activist intentions.

Interestingly, the path between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions, while significant, was negative. The less supportive one's social environment was of activism, the more likely one was to engage in high-risk activist behaviors. It is plausible that because high-risk activist behaviors frequently involve breaking the law and working outside traditional systems of power to effect change (Corning & Myers, 2002), a more supportive social environment may lead to the perception that high-risk activist behaviors are not necessary (Spellings et al., 2012). The finding from the current study that sexual minority individuals were more likely than heterosexual individuals to have engaged in past high-risk activist behaviors and intended to engage in more high-risk activism in the future supports this possibility.

Many sexual minority individuals come from settings that are openly hostile to sexual minority civil rights and view it as a threat to their religious freedom (Yen & Zampelli, 2017). It seems possible that for activists who are in settings that are openly hostile to their achievement of civil rights, subjective norms may feel so intractable that high-risk activist behaviors are perceived to be the only method to bring about social justice. Another explanation is that because the preliminary Pearson correlation between activist subjective norms and high-risk activist intentions was not significant, other

factors, such as statistical suppression (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood; Tzelgov & Hennik, 1991), were present and underlying the negative path between the two variables. Results indicated that a negative path may have been present because activist subjective norms were strengthening the effect of perceived behavioral control (activism) on high-risk activist intentions.

Similarly surprising was that activist subjective norms were not a statistically significant predictor of low-risk activist intentions. This result contradicts both previous TPB research and previous activism research demonstrating that subjective norms are a positive predictor of behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Connor & Armitage, 2001; Fletcher, 2018; Friedman & Ayres, 2013; Kaysen & Stake, 2011; Spellings et al., 2012; Swank & Fahs, 2013). As there was a high Pearson correlation between activist subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (activism), the lack of a statistically significant path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions may have been a product of multicollinearity (Grewal et al., 2004). Multicollinearity can lead to relationships that are a poor reflection of relationships between variables (Kraha et al., 2012). As multicollinearity was present in the current study, the lack of a significant path between activist subjective norms and low-risk activist intentions should be interpreted with a degree of caution.

Results from the SEM analyses indicated that while the commitment model accounted for significantly more variance in low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions, most of the additional variance explained was a result of the inclusion of past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors as predictors. The commitment model only accounted for slightly more variance in low-risk activist

intentions (78.9%) than the past behavior post-hoc model that only had past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk activist behaviors as predictors (76.1%). The commitment model also only accounted for slightly more variance in high-risk intentions (58.9%) than the post-hoc model with only past low-risk activist behaviors and past high-risk behaviors as predictors (56.3%). This result is in line with previous recognized research that has already established that past behavior is an effective predictor of future behavioral intentions (Connor & Armitage, 1998; Ouellette & Wood, 1998).

It is evident from the current study that many of the TPB variables associated with activism were much more associated with low-risk activist intentions and behaviors than high-risk activist intentions and behaviors. Post-hoc analyses from the past behavior TPB model indicated that past low-risk activist behaviors were associated with activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms. For reasons that are not clear, past high-risk activist behaviors were not predictive of activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms. Some research suggests that individuals are drawn to high-risk activism for intensely personal and ideological reasons that lead to a strong identification with the high-risk activist movement in question (McAdam, 1986). As activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms are more general activist variables, and not specific to a single high-risk activist behavior, these TPB variables likely did not capture the intensely personal reasons individuals have for engaging in high-risk activist behaviors, hence the nonsignificant path. The activism literature would benefit from future empirical research that can examine some of the reasons for the disconnection between high-risk activism and TPB variables associated with activism.

Also of note is that, despite the strong influence of past activist behaviors on future intentions, the effects of activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) on low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions remained largely significant even after including past activist behaviors into the past behavior TPB model. This indicates that though past activist behaviors are strong predictors of activist intentions (Ouellette & Wood, 1998), TPB variables have effects on activist intentions that are independent of past activist behaviors. This result is important because it demonstrates to educators that, though past activist behaviors are a very strong predictor of activist intentions, activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) still make contributions to activist intentions above and beyond past activist behaviors. This may be empowering to educators because unlike past activist behaviors, activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) are variables that can be changed in the present (Ajzen, 1987; Ajzen, 1991).

When the different structural models were compared using model selection criteria (Lin et al., 2017), the covariate model emerged as the best fitting model. In the covariate model, sexual orientation and religious affiliation were added as covariates to the traditional TPB model. Being a sexual minority and being spiritual but not religious both contributed to various factors associated with activism. In addition to explaining 12% more variance in low-risk activist intentions and 67% more variance in high-risk activist intentions than the traditional TPB model, the covariate model also explained some variance in activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and activist subjective norms. These results are notable because they highlight groups of individuals who are more activist-oriented. Understanding what makes individuals in these groups

more activist-oriented would help in creating interventions to increase interest in activism among other groups. Future research may want to investigate the factors that increase activist intentions among sexual minorities and the spiritual but not religious.

**Limitations**

There are several limitations that decrease the applicability of the current study's findings. One of the primary limitations of the current study is its cross-sectional nature. As the current study is not longitudinal, it is unknown how well activist intentions translate into future activist behaviors. Not examining activist behaviors leaves out a significant data point as it remains unknown how well each of the study variables predicts future activist behaviors and not just activist intentions. Intentions do not always lead to behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Connor, 2001), and this may be particularly true for activism. The potential disconnect between intentions and behaviors is important because activist behaviors are oftentimes seen as more important to marginalized individuals than well-meaning intentions (Edwards, 2006). Oftentimes, well-meaning individuals intend to be beneficent but harm marginalized communities instead (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). When activist intentions and behaviors do not align, cultural mistrust is built (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002), and the development of solidarity across groups is hindered (Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2007). These potential negative consequences highlight the shortcomings of measuring activist intentions alone. Considering the possible backlash effects and other negative consequences for engaging in activism (Corning & Myers, 2002; Rudman et al. 2012), it is clear that assessing future activist behaviors, in addition to activist intentions, will expand our understanding of the factors that contribute to activism further.

Another limitation of the current study is its assessment of activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. The items used to construct these three latent variables are not designed to assess activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism) and activist subjective norms directly. Instead, the items used to construct the predictor variables in the current study are intended to assess social justice attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). While there is overlap between the two, not all activist behaviors are consistent with the spirit of social justice. For example, some individuals may engage in activist behaviors to limit the civil rights of others (e.g., pro-life activism; Bailey, Mummolo, & Noel; Eckel & Grossman, 2008). The items assessing low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions examine activist behaviors in general, irrespective of social justice orientation (Corning & Myers, 2002; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). The current study's findings are likely not very applicable to examining intentions to engage in conservatively-oriented activist behaviors.

Another limitation of the current study is that the sample is not representative of the general U.S. population. The study sample is more female (74.9%) and better educated (74.7% possess a Bachelor's degree) than the general U.S. population (50.8%, 30.9% respectively; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). The sample is also quite secular (54.8% identified as atheist, agnostic, or spiritual but not religious). Though the U.S. census does not ask about religion, other polling data estimates that only 22.8% of Americans identify as non-religious (Pew Research Center, 2014). Helping professionals are also vastly overrepresented (41.3%). Given that helping professionals are likely to have had more social justice education than the

average American, the generalizability of the current study's results is affected (Krings, Austic, Gutiérrez, & Dirksen., 2015; Lee et al., 2013; Liebert et al., 2011). It is possible that the measurement and structural models in the current study would have looked different if the sample in the current study was more representative of the U.S. population and was less female, more religious, less well-educated, and contained fewer helping professionals (Pew Research Center, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b).

Finally, parameter estimates should also be interpreted with a degree of caution in the current study. Multicollinearity between some of the variables appeared to exist, which led to questions regarding the parameter estimates in the current study (Grewal et al., 2004). In particular, parameter estimates for perceived behavioral control (activism) and activist subjective norms should be interpreted with caution in the current study.

**Implications for Practice**

As the self-determination of marginalized groups becomes increasingly threatened in the current sociopolitical climate, the importance of activism will rise (Williams & Medlock, 2017; Vera & Speight, 2003). Activism grounded in social justice has numerous benefits and is of immense societal importance. Many activities people typically associate with activism, such as protesting, rely less on formal institutions and standard bureaucratic processes to effect change (Corning & Myers, 2002; Lee et al., 2017). For this reason, activist behaviors may be efficacious when behaviors that rely on working within systems of power fail to make a difference (e.g., advocacy; Lee et al., 2013).

If multicultural educators seek to increase low-risk activist intentions among others, the structural model from the current study suggests that fostering activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control are efficacious interventions. Activist attitudes can be cultivated through the discussion of oppressive systems, highlighting inequities, discussing values, and more (Davis & Wagner, 2005). Multicultural educators can increase the sense of perceived behavioral control in others by engaging in experiential activities with participants, discussing their own experiences, bringing in guest speakers, and by doing visualization exercises (Bandura, 1977).

If the goal of multicultural educators is to foster high-risk activist intentions, some caveats should be kept in mind when extrapolating the results from the current study. Many of the factors that contribute to the development of high-risk activist intentions remain largely unknown even after the current study. Nonetheless, the current study suggests that activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism) make some contributions to the development of high-risk activist intentions.

Multicultural educators and leaders also should note that sexual minorities appear to be very interested in activism. Sexual minorities endorse higher activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), activist subjective norms, low-risk activist intentions, and high-risk activist intentions. Multicultural educators and leaders should keep in mind that sexual minorities are more likely to be interested in activism than heterosexual individuals.

It should also be noted that spirituality, in comparison to religiosity, is predictive of activist attitudes, perceived behavioral control (activism), and low-risk activist

intentions. Spirituality being associated with various activism-related factors supports previous research that emphasizes the importance of spirituality to activism and social justice work (Keating, 2008; Shahjahan, 2010). Some hypothesize that spirituality is associated with activism because spirituality advocates the importance of loving others, connects individuals, and gives them purpose (Larson & Murtadha, 2002). Social justice leaders should consider the role spirituality can play in sustaining ongoing activist behaviors.

The current study is of particular interest to social justice-minded professionals, such as counseling psychologists, who seek to incorporate activism into their work (Ivey & Collins, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). As counseling psychology educators seek to socialize the next generation of students into the role of social justice agent (Flores et al., 2014; Goodman et al., 2004), they will seek interventions that can facilitate social justice processes. As mentioned previously, the current study demonstrates that past behavior, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation are associated with various activism-related factors. If past activist behaviors, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation are to be discussed with counseling psychology students, discretion is recommended due to the sensitive nature of the above topics (Hinchliff, Gott, & Galena, 2005). Personal relationships will likely be necessary for educators to discuss past activism, sexual orientation, and spirituality with their students. In larger classroom settings, counseling psychology educators can focus on potentially less sensitive topics, such as activist attitudes and perceived behavioral control (activism), that also make contributions to activist intentions.

**Implications for Future Research**

The current study provides a framework for understanding how both low-risk activist intentions and high-risk activist intentions develop, but it can still be expanded upon in a number of ways. The literature on activism would benefit from longitudinal studies that can examine activism as it progresses within an individual. The temporal stability of TPB models predicting activism remains to be seen. A longitudinal study could better establish the link between past activist behaviors, future activist intentions, and future activist behaviors.

The present research could also be elaborated upon through more thorough investigations into differences between individuals who engage in low-risk activist behaviors vs. high-risk activist behaviors. The current study reveals some of the demographic characteristics of individuals who intend to engage in low and high-risk activist behaviors (e.g., sexual orientation), but little is known about the differences in personality, attitudes, and life experiences that distinguish low-risk activists from high-risk activists. For example, it is not known why many of the TPB variables are more important to low-risk activist intentions than high-risk activist intentions.

Future research can also expand upon the current study by examining potential moderating effects. It is possible that some of the paths among the latent variables in the current study could have been different if moderators were introduced into the model. Although beyond the scope of the present study, it is possible that the relationship between activist subjective norms and the criterion variables in the current study could have been different for helping professionals, for instance. For helping professionals, there is likely increased support for social justice behaviors (Ivey & Collins, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003), so the path between activist subjective norms and criterion variables

may have been significant and positive. The activism literature would benefit from examining the potential effects of moderating variables on the paths between TPB variables and activist intentions.

Furthermore, while the traditional TPB fit the data well and was parsimonious, the strong influence of past behavior on future intentions in the commitment model indicated that some important factors were missing from the current analyses (Ajzen, 1991). It is likely that because past activist behavior was a construct of high similarity to activist intentions, it compensated for the absence of other factors from the traditional TPB model such as loss aversion, available time, and personal history (Bergen, 2012; Eckel & Grossman, 2008; Fletcher, 2018; Thaler et al., 1997). Unlike past behavior, factors like loss aversion can be changed in the present (Levy, 2017) and, therefore, shaped through targeted interventions to increase activist intentions. Future research should investigate factors that were not included in the traditional TPB model that may be important predictors of activist intentions and future activist behaviors.

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# APPENDIX A

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Age __

Please select the gender identity with which you most identify:

__ Male

__ Female

__ Transgender

__ Gender non-conforming

__ Not listed

__ Prefer not to answer

Please select the race/ethnicity with which you most identify:

__ White

__ Black

__ Asian or Pacific Islander

__ Latino/a

__ American Indian/Native American

__ Other race

__ Biracial/multiracial

Do you consider yourself to be:

__ Straight/heterosexual

__ Gay or Lesbian

__ Bisexual

Which of the following have been diagnosed?

(*Select all that apply*)

__ A sensory impairment (vision or hearing)

__ A mobility impairment

__ A learning disability (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)

__ A mental health disorder

__ a disability or impairment not mentioned above

Approximately how many years have you lived in the United States? __

Are you a US Citizen?

__ Yes

__ No

Please estimate your annual yearly income:

__ < $25,000

__ $25,000 - $50,000

__ $50,000 - $75,000

__ $75,000 - $100,000

__ > $100,000

Please indicate the highest education level you have completed

__Some high school

__High school or GED

__ Associates degree

__ Some university

__ Bachelor's degree

__ Master's degree

__ Doctoral degree

Are you currently employed?

__Full-time

__ Part-time

__ Temporarily

__ Unemployed

Please select the helping profession for which you have received training and/or with which you most identify:

__ Health educator or community health worker

__ Mental health or marriage and family therapist

__ Probation officer or correctional treatment specialist

__ Rehabilitation counselor

__ School or career counselor

__ Social and human serviced assistant

__ Social worker

__ Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselor

Please estimate the years you have spent in your respective profession __

Please estimate number of multicultural courses (including CEUs and seminars) you have taken __

# APPENDIX B

# ACTIVIST IDENTITY SCALE

To help you understand the next questions, please read the following broad definition of activism:

> "The goal of activism is to advocate a social or political cause (e.g. protecting the environment, human-rights issues, or preventing wars); the means of activism can vary greatly, e.g. from institutionalized acts like starting a petition to unconventional acts like civil disobedience."

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. Being an activist is central to who I am
2. I identify myself as an activist
3. People who know me well would call me an activist
4. Being an activist is an important reflection of who I am

# APPENDIX C

## ACTIVISM ORIENTATION SCALE - SHORT

**Instructions - past:** Please indicate in the "Past" column, to what extent you engaged in each of the following activities in the past year

Scale:

0 – Not At All 1 – A Little 2 – Moderately 3 – A Lot

**Instructions - AOS-future:** Please indicate in the "Future" column, how likely it is that you will engage in each of the following activities in the future.

Scale:

0 – Not At All 1 – A Little 2 – Moderately 3 – A Lot

**The 7 high risk items are bolded**

| Behavior | Past | Future |
|---|---|---|
| Invite a friend to attend a meeting of a political organization or event | | |
| Serve as an officer in a political organization | | |
| **Engage in a political activity in which you knew you will be arrested** | | |
| Organize a political event | | |
| Give a lecture or talk about a social or political issue | | |
| **Engage in a physical confrontation at a political rally** | | |
| Send a letter or e-mail expressing a political opinion to the editor of a periodical or television show | | |
| Boycott a product for political reasons | | |
| **Engage in a political activity in which you feared that some of your possessions would be damaged** | | |
| Distribute information representing a particular social or political group's cause | | |
| **Engage in a political activity in which you suspect there would be a confrontation with the police or possible arrest** | | |
| Send a letter or email about a political issue to a public official | | |
| Attend a political organization's regular planning meeting | | |
| Sign a petition for a political cause | | |
| **Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest** | | |
| Encourage a friend to join a political organization | | |
| Donate money to a political organization | | |
| **Block access to a building or public area with your body** | | |
| Wear a t-shirt or button with a political message | | |
| **Engage in any political activity in which you fear for your personal safety** | | |
| Participate in a protest march or demonstration | | |
| Help organizing a campaign on a social or political topic | | |

# APPENDIX D

# SOCIAL JUSTICE SCALE

**Instructions**

Show how much you favor or oppose each idea by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

*Attitudes*

1. I believe it is important to make sure all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups.
2. I believe that it is important to allow individuals and groups to define and describe their problems, experiences, and goals in their own terms.
3. I believe that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression.
4. I believe that it is important to try to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being.
5. I believe that it is important to help individuals and groups to pursue their chosen goals in life.
6. I believe that it is important to promote the physical and emotional well-being of individuals and groups.
7. I believe that it is important to respect and appreciate people's diverse social identities.
8. I believe that it is important to allow others to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives.
9. I believe that it is important to support community organization and institutions that help individuals and groups achieve their aims.
10. I believe that it is important to promote fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and resources in society.
11. I believe that is important to act for social justice.

*Perceived Behavioral Control*

12. I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others' lives.
13. I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering.
14. If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality.
15. I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being.

16. I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community.

*Social Norms*

17. Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social injustices
18. Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices.
19. Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice.
20. Other people around me are aware of social injustices and power inequalities.

# APPENDIX E

# VALIDITY CHECK ITEMS

Please select yes for this question

_____ Yes

_____ No

Please select no for this question

____ Yes

____ No

Please select Slightly Disagree for this question

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

# APPENDIX F

# ASU IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Giac-Thao Tran

CISA: Counseling and Counseling Psychology

480/727-4067

alisia@asu.edu

Dear Giac-Thao Tran:

On 4/17/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title: | Understanding and Predicting Activist Intentions: An Extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior |
| Investigator: | Giac-Thao Tran |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00008132 |
| Funding: | None |
| Grant Title: | None |
| Grant ID: | None |
| Documents Reviewed: | • Informed Consent Non-SONA, Category: Consent Form;<br>• Recruitment script, Category: Recruitment Materials;<br>• Document containing measures, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);<br>• Informed Consent SONA, Category: Consent Form;<br>• Gilbert's IRB, Category: IRB Protocol; |

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 4/16/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,
IRB Administrator

cc: Gilbert Jew

Giac-Thao Tran