

WORK, LOVE, AND DISSENT: ACTIVIST PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSITION TO
ADULTHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Jonathan Horowitz: Work, Love, and Dissent: Activist Participation in the Transition to
Adulthood
(Under the direction of Kenneth Andrews)

What happens to activists in the transition out of college? I collect longitudinal, mixed-methods data on 192 social justice activists across 15 separate colleges and universities and over a span of four years to answer this question. I find that declines in organizational opportunity are most responsible for declining activism; that the characteristics of college experience play a substantial role in shaping post-college activist pathways; and that activism is both honored and discouraged by worried friends and family members. The findings further suggest that structural factors play a much more important role in mobilization than biographical availability, that the types of people who enter into paid and volunteer pathways are distinct from each other, and that conceptions of “social norms” are inadequate to capture the effects of social influence. These studies shows that social movements researchers can benefit from integrating life course principles and approaches into their research. Additionally, life course researchers should strongly consider studying unusual behaviors like activism, as the current focus on family, work, and health have led to limited theoretical conceptions of many life course phenomena.

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While I am supposed to maintain some degree of “scientific objectivity” towards those I study, I admit that my participants have made that difficult. I admire them, and eagerly look forward to reading about their lives every time I collect data. And without them, this dissertation could not exist. I thank them for sharing their lives with me.

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CHAPTER 1: A NEW APPROACH TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT PARTICIPATION

Studying who becomes and stays involved with activism is one of the core areas of social movements research. There have been numerous studies looking at who protests (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Biggs 2006; Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011; DiGrazia 2014; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; McVeigh and Smith 1999; Paulsen 1991; Paulsen 1994; Schussman and Soule 2005), organizational influences on activist participation (Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1995; Nepstad 2004), how people get involved with social movements (Jasper 1997; Klandermans 1997; Klandermans 2007; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; Munson 2008; Snow, Zurcher, and Eklund-Olson 1980), and which people stay involved over time (Corrigan-Brown 2012; McAdam 1988). But despite the ongoing interest in activist participation, the relationship between activism and other life course domains remains under-theorized and under-examined. Some long-term social movement participants have tried their best to reconstruct their entire lives around activism (Jasper 1997; McAdam 1988), but there is no reason to think that activism was always their whole life. And individuals are integrated into education, work, and family institutions that all have major effects on individual behavior and outcomes (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Cherlin 2004; Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003; Horowitz 2016; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008; Shanahan 2000; Stevens, Armstrong, and Arum 2008).

The research that does look at work, family, and educational influences on activism is limited. There is a set of studies that look at the factors influencing individual-level protest participation (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011; DiGrazia 2014;

McVeigh and Smith 1999; Saunders, Grasso, Olcese, Rainsford, and Rootes 2012; Schussman and Soule 2005). The extent to which these studies actually focus on life course phenomena varies considerably. Most of the studies are content to simply test for biographical availability, where measurements of marital, work, and educational statuses at a single cross-sectional time point are included as proxies for time commitment (DiGrazia 2014; McVeigh and Smith 1999; Saunders et al. 2012; Schussman and Soule 2005). In theory, qualitative studies could complement the quantitative studies and contextualize activism within the life course. However, aside from McAdam's (1988) pioneering study of Freedom Summer participants, qualitative research has not provided new theoretical advances. Instead, researchers largely return to biographical availability as an organizing construct (e.g., Corrigan-Brown 2012; Klatch 1999).

The most perplexing part of the fixation on biographical availability is that quantitative research has found very little support for it. Schussman and Soule (2005) find that opportunities are the primary determinant of protest participation, and Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) find that biographical availability has little effect once people are already involved in a social movement. Corrigan-Brown (2012) finds more support than most; work hours has a statistically significant relationship with activist participation, it is clear that working substantially more than 40 hours per week can constrict discretionary activities. But Corrigan-Brown's (2012) other findings are difficult to interpret, especially in the early 21st century. Marital status is associated with lower rates of contentious political engagement, which makes sense in an era where marriage is an instrument of social control but not where marriage is the union of two consenting partners (Cherlin 2004). On the other hand, having children results in *greater* likelihood of activist participation, not less; this would suggest that having children frees up time for more discretionary activities, which would be shocking news to social scientists (and parents).

Furthermore, age exerts an independent effect on activism beyond these limiting factors, but what time commitments are increasing with age independent of work and family?

I have a simple explanation for the repeated failure to find convincing evidence for biographical availability: The life course is not just a series of responsibilities that prevent people from doing what they want. Individuals move through institutional settings and social networks that provide opportunities as well as responsibilities, and the social psychological support that people receive for activism may be age-graded as well. Ironically, social movements research has found far more evidence for the effects of institutional settings and social support on activist participation (Binder and Wood 2013; Jasper 1997; McAdam 1986; Nepstad 2004; Reyes 2015; Van Dyke 1998; Zhao 1998). If these vary over the life course—and life course sociology argues that they do—then that provides a much more compelling explanation for age-related changes in activism.

However, theories looking at the determinants of activist participation—such as institutional context, biographical availability, and community support—were not constructed with the life course in mind. Research on biographical availability takes a cross-sectional approach, comparing individuals in college to those who have already graduated, rather than looking at the same participants over time (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; McAdam 1988; McCarthy and Zald 1973; Schussman and Soule 2005; but see Corrigan-Brown 2012). The study of social support in movements usually focuses on the organizational context as a form of support, ignoring relationships at work, school, or family (Jasper 1997; Nepstad 2004). Research on social support and activism completely also largely ignores change over time, with single-time measurements as the norm (e.g., Jasso and Opp 1997). Studies of activist participation rarely interrogate the differences between volunteering and working for a social movement

organization (Fisher and McInerney 2012; McAdam 1988; Van Dyke and Dixon 2013; Van Dyke, Dixon, and Helen 2007); this is problematic since there is no doubt that work and volunteer domains are complementary, and the biographical characteristics that affect work should not be the same as those that affect volunteering (Oesterle, Johnson, and Mortimer 2004; Rotolo and Wilson 2006; Wilson and Musick 1997). It is telling that in Klandermans (1997), he argues that one reason why people cease activism is because the social movement organization they are involved with ceases to exist. It is probably more likely that the activist—as part of an age-graded life course transition such as graduation, marriage, or a finding new job—will move to another location without comparable activist opportunities. This would mean that the SMO functionally ceases to exist for that person, but this receives no mention.

The Present Dissertation

The centerpiece of this dissertation is an original data collection effort, tracking individual-level activist participation as a recent set of millennial protestors transition out of college. I designed all of the measurements, collected all of the data, and analyzed all of the results for the first prospective longitudinal study of activist participation since 1965 (Jennings, Markus, Niemi, and Stoker 2005). My quantitative data set follows 192 former college activists across four waves of data collection, spanning the last year of college to three years after graduation. These activists come from a range of educational institutions, regions of the country, social causes, and demographic backgrounds—which to my knowledge makes it the single most diverse dataset of activists available, and which covers a large range of the activists in the post-2008 millennial protest wave (Milkman 2017). The quantitative measurements include a considerable amount of detail on relationships with members of an egocentric social network, educational background, time usage, activist opportunities, and both paid and volunteer activist

participation. I also conduct interviews with a subset of 47 participants across three different survey waves, for a total of 84 semi-structured interviews.

I make three substantive contributions to the social movement literature. I follow the participants for three years after college graduation to see why participants stop volunteering after college graduation (Chapter 2), what biographical characteristics predict activism after college graduation (Chapter 3), and whether there are age-graded social norms around activism (Chapter 4). I analyze the quantitative data in Chapters 2 and 3 using fixed-effects models and multi-level multinomial logit models to look at the determinants of activist participation in the transition out of college. My analysis of the qualitative data in Chapter 4 conducts a “black swan” analysis of social norms around activist participation (Flyvbjerg 2006).

In each chapter of the dissertation, I use existing findings on social movements, life course sociology, and the sociology of higher education to theorize activist participation in the transition out of college and test theoretical predictions. In Chapter 2, I show that biographical availability and social support do not have much effect on activist participation through changes in activist participation; instead, it is the change in activist opportunities that makes a difference. In Chapter 3, I show that the same factors do not predict paid and volunteer activism; while the type of educational institution predicts volunteer activism, paid activists come from higher class backgrounds and major in the social and behavioral sciences. Finally, in Chapter 4, I examine social norms for activism in the transition to adulthood, and find that there is very little that fits traditional descriptions of “social norms.” In fact, while family members support activism, they actively discourage the participants from continuing. This suggests a very different interpretation of what “social support” looks like in social movements, as well as in other contexts as well.

In addition to the overall goal of investigating activist participation in a life course transition, the three studies here reinforce each other. The lack of evidence for social support for activism in Chapter 2 is partially explained by the qualitative analysis in Chapter 4, which shows that social support around activism is mixed and does not prescribe a clear course of action. The decision to treat paid and volunteer activist participation as substitutes in Chapter 2 is further justified by the extended analysis in Chapter 3 showing that substantially different *types* of activists make the transition into paid activism than those who remain volunteers. The finding that family members use “social concern” instead of “social norms” in Chapter 4 to dissuade activist behavior is explained partially by the collegiate and parental child-rearing contexts where individualization and choice are promoted (Chapter 3).

My approach represents a subtle shift in the traditional approach to social movement participation. Most previous research investigates how organizational characteristics affect activist participation, but the focus on social movement organizations misses a fundamental truth; people exist in multiple domains at the same time (e.g., work, family, volunteering), and interact with people outside of the movement (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008; Shanahan 2000). Instead of examining the characteristics of organizations that recruit and retain members, I find college activists and follow them as they graduate from college and attempt to re-establish their lives in a new setting. This new perspective offers the opportunity to learn much more about activist participation than another addition to the already-excellent analysis of organizational factors in recruitment and retention. However, at some point it would behoove sociologists to investigate the interaction between life course and organizational factors, although such a study would go well beyond the pioneering parental socialization and politics study (Jennings, Markus, Niemi, and Stoker 2005).

It will take a considerable amount of theoretical integration and empirical work to look at activism in the context of individual lives; the present study is a modest attempt to begin this process, rather than a definitive final statement on activism in the life course. For one, the data only spans a single life course transition—the transition out of college. This study has only limited data on how family transitions affect activism, with especially few participants making the transition to parenthood. There is not enough detail on individual workplaces to render judgments about how the subjective characteristics of work—such as autonomy, job security, and workplace relationships—affect activism. Therefore, the present study is about a single institutionalized life course transition, and its effects on activism.

I tentatively plan to continue collecting data to capture family transitions, and to collect data on work histories in future survey waves to compensate for these limitations. Between the range of quantitative and qualitative data that I do not analyze here—as well as future planned survey waves—this dissertation does not represent the end of this particular project. I plan to continue collecting data with this sample at least until 2022, which would mark the 10-year anniversary of their college graduation. Future research plans using this dataset are tentative; while I plan to extend the quantitative analyses through other life course transitions, I also plan to use the qualitative data to contextualize the quantitative findings and to generate new social movement and life course theory. However, because this is a sample of activists instead of Americans, generalizing the findings here to non-activists is difficult. Thus, I theorize new directions for life course research in Chapter 5, instead of claiming that the evidence with non-activists generalizes to other populations in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

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CHAPTER 2: WHY DO COLLEGE SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS STOP WHEN THEY GRADUATE? EXPLAINING VOLUNTEER ACTIVIST PARTICIPATION IN A LIFE COURSE TRANSITION

Why does college social justice activism decline after college graduation? Today, “a new political generation” is fighting for social and economic justice (Milkman 2017: 2), but research conducted on previous cohorts of college activists suggests that many scale down their commitments as they make the transition into adulthood (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988). This is allegedly because college students have substantial free time to pursue activism in college (McCarthy and Zald 1973); as young adults enter work after graduation, it squeezes out other “optional” activities that a person performed in the past (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Klatch 1999). Thus, we expect that *biographical availability* will decline as contemporary social justice activists graduate, and therefore they would scale back their commitments.

However, biographical availability is confounded with social network resources embedded on college campuses. Residential college campuses are vibrant social environments, with dense and diverse social networks that provide *social support* and connect participants to *organizational opportunities* (Chambliss and Takacs 2014; Moffatt 1989; Reyes 2015; Zhao 1998). Recent college graduates face both higher participation costs at the same time as diminished access to activist social support and organizational opportunities. While the life course moves individuals through different age-graded responsibilities (Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965), it also simultaneously moves individuals through different social environments.

In this study, I use new longitudinal data on the contemporary generation of social justice activists (Milkman 2017), beginning from the last year of college graduation and spanning the

early post-graduate years. I use descriptive statistics to illustrate how activists' lives change upon graduation. I find that social justice volunteering drops approximately 80% upon college graduation; I then use fixed effects models to investigate whether biographical availability, social support, or organizational opportunities best explain the precipitous decline in activist participation. Biographical availability and social support are not statistically significant, while organizational opportunity has only moderate effects on activism. I then turn to qualitative data to show that network-based measures of organizational opportunity likely understate the amount of organizational opportunity on college campuses. This is because the walkable physical environment of college campuses also provides greater organizational opportunity.

The present findings have several implications for research on social movements. Social movements scholars should consider returning to theoretical insights introduced by Zhao (1998) that focus on the spatial ecology of activism, explore alternative conceptions of biographical availability that are not necessarily tied to life course stages, and analyze social support for activism using more dynamic research designs. Finally, this study suggests that social justice organizations do not adequately present opportunities to recent college graduates, and should pay more attention to how they develop and present opportunity to millennial activists.

Three Explanations for Activism and its Decline

There are three different potential explanations for the prominence of social movement participation on college campuses, but declines in voluntary activism after graduation. The most popular explanation is that recent college graduates have greater *biographical unavailability* after college (McCarthy and Zald 1973; Morris 1981). However, college students also benefit from social networks on college campuses that generate substantial *social support* and *organizational opportunities* (Moffatt 1989; Morris 1981; Reyes 2015; Van Dyke 1998; Zhao

1998). Therefore, declines in social support or organizational opportunities could also explain why college social justice activists tend to stop after college graduation.

Biographical Unavailability

Most scholarship on college student activism relies implicitly or explicitly on McCarthy and Zald's (1973) theory that college students have unusual amounts of free time. McAdam (1986; 1988) further develops the construct of "biographical availability" and provides empirical evidence for biographical availability in Freedom Summer participants. Older individuals who have professional jobs and families could not participate in high-cost or high-risk activism, and are "biographically unavailable"; but upper-level college students had summers "off," freedom from parental control, and were able to complete multiple weeks of intensive activism in Mississippi. Although the empirical support for biographical availability is mixed, it remains the default explanation for why young adults participate in activism (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Milkman 2017; Schussman and Soule 2005).

The theoretical appeal of biographical (un)availability is twofold. First, it is intuitively simple; individuals with more spare time have the ability to complete "discretionary" activities. For example, imagine two hypothetical individuals with different amounts of "required" activities such as work, class, and commuting; the first person spends 30 hours per week on "required" activities, while the second has commitments totaling 50 hours. The first person should be able to spend 20 hours on activities that the second cannot; they can use that time to learn to cook, practice playing a musical instrument, or participate in a social movement organization (McAdam 1986). A lack of time can therefore short-circuit an individual's activist tendencies by overwhelming them with other commitments.

Second, biographical availability explanations are consistent with life course approaches to young adulthood. Many time-intensive roles are age-graded, so that individuals are not

expected to take on too many responsibilities while in college. For example, most individuals expect to complete schooling before they take on the responsibilities of professional work (Shanahan 2000). Furthermore, recent research suggests that many college students simply do not have many college responsibilities at all, spending a substantial amount of time partying instead of studying or working (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). Because individuals are expected to take on more work and marital responsibilities as they transition out of school, they would increasingly become “biographically unavailable” and we would expect social justice activism to decline (Klatch 1999; White 2010). Thus, the first hypothesis is:

H1: As biographical unavailability rises after college, volunteer activist participation declines.

However, a decline in biographical availability may not be the best explanation for declining activism among recent college graduates. First, McCarthy and Zald (1973) note that college students had tremendous amounts of free time in the 1960s and 1970s. This is perhaps because these students came from more privileged backgrounds than today’s college students; both Klatch’s (1999) and McAdam’s (1988) life history accounts omit any concern with tuition payments, student debt, or working for pay (as in Settersten Jr. and Ray 2010). Furthermore, the average age of childbearing has risen substantially in more recent cohorts, suggesting that this is not an issue for many recent college graduates (Shanahan 2000). Contemporary analysts usually assume *a priori* that student status represents fewer responsibilities, although the extent of student responsibilities in college is an empirical question (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Saunders, Grasso, Olcese, Rainsford, and Rootes 2012; Schussman and Soule 2005).

Second, life history interviews suffer from retrospective memory bias; while work does take a considerable amount of time, people are *expected* to work once they leave school (Elder 1975; Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965; Shanahan 2000). The result is that when recent

college graduates re-interpret their past actions to make sense of their lives, they would rewrite their own narratives to emphasize the demands of work because it is a ready-made cultural explanation (Andrews 1991). Recent college graduates may not have alternate “vocabulary[ies] of motive” to explain how changes in their social life—such as social support and organizational opportunities—affect their participation (Mills 1940: 905); but these occur around the same time, and could be actual reason for declines in activist volunteering.

Social Support

There is good reason to expect that social justice activists would receive considerable social support in college: Colleges contain built-in communities to express support for challenges to authority (Klatch 1999; Morris 1981). The result is that there may be considerable support for social justice activism within a collegiate social network. Social justice activists may also receive more support from their friends and family during college; friends and family may dismiss idealistic action as youthful innocence in college, but become concerned if activism begins to conflict with work responsibilities.

Supportive communities are important to activist recruitment and persistence because they transform the “cost” of participation into a “benefit” (Jasper 1997). People go to meetings, protests, and other events because it feels good to work together with others towards a goal, perform social rituals, and interact with others who validate their beliefs. Nepstad (2004) echoes this point, showing how Catholic anti-war activists persist in the face of strong disapproval and legal sanction. And while these communities can occur almost anywhere, there is evidence that college campuses provide particularly fertile ground for activist support (Klatch 1999). However, once a person graduates from college they leave behind their social justice community, and would receive less emotional support for activism.

Social support for activism may also be age-graded. One well-known folk theory is that students in college are more likely to be radical and left-wing, and that these tendencies are gradually attenuated by age. In popular culture, this is illustrated by the apocryphal quote “If you're not a liberal at twenty you have no heart, if you're not a conservative at thirty you have no brain.”¹ Just as certain forms of deviance are viewed as normative early in life but later are discouraged (Massoglia and Uggen 2010), activism could be encouraged by parents in college but discouraged upon college graduation. Long-time friends and family who may have tolerated or endorsed movement participation in the past may revoke support, stating that the participant needs to focus on a career. Following the predictions of life-course sociology: We would expect that if friends and families view activism as age-appropriate in college but age-inappropriate after graduating, participants will modify their behavior to match social expectations (Elder 1975). Thus, the second hypothesis is:

H2: As social support for activism drops after college, volunteer activist participation declines.

However, while support for activism is an important part of micro-mobilization processes, it may not explain declines in activist behavior among recent college graduates. First, while college campuses are particularly fertile grounds for social movement support, Jasper (1997) documents a wide number of social movement communities that do *not* exist on college campuses. Individuals with strong ideological convictions may be motivated to re-connect to social justice communities, which would mean that there may not be a major drop in social support. Second, social support is both a cause of movement behavior and a consequence of it (Jasper 1997; Nepstad 2004). As a result, it is possible that a college activist graduates, leaves

¹ In this author's view, the ages in this quote seem to change depending on who the quote is attributed to and what point the speaker is trying to make.

campus, stops participating in activism, and *only then* loses their social movement community (Degenne and Lebeaux 2005). Finally, while social support for activism may be age-graded, the fact that activists often remain involved at reduced levels over time means that this withdrawal of support may be ineffective at changing behavior (Corrigall-Brown 2012; McAdam 1988).

Organizational Opportunity

College students are exposed to a substantial number of activism opportunities in college. This is partially because college campuses provide a framework for civic engagement by allowing students to form student interest organizations, many of which are committed to activist goals. However, the physical structure of college campuses leads to an exceptionally large number of network ties spread across a diverse array of social groups. As people graduate, they leave behind this unique social space, and have less access to activist opportunities.

We would expect college students to have especially dense and diverse social network ties because college campuses provide physical proximity to peers and the shared social spaces for frequent social interaction. For example, residential college campuses are designed to be walkable and easy to navigate, as students need to make their way from living quarters to multiple different academic sites over the course of a day. Similarly, students on residential college campuses either live right next to each other in dormitories or in student neighborhoods close to campus (Lofland 1968; Moffatt 1989). This creates a sense of insularity on many residential college campuses, where all social life, work, and friendship occurs within several blocks (Reyes 2015). Social interaction takes place virtually everywhere on college campuses, including shared bathrooms; the result is that college life is characterized by exceptionally dense social networks that spread across campus (Chambliss and Takacs 2014; Zhao 1998).

With dense social networks across campus, individuals are aware of a wide range of social justice organizations, and ties that connect individuals to activist contexts are a key

ingredient in activist participation (McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Schussman and Soule 2005).

The dense social networks on college campuses that connect individuals to a range of activist opportunities provides an ideal environment for social movement participation (see also: Van Dyke 1998). But after leaving college, the degree of social interaction drops dramatically (Arum and Roksa 2014; Settersten Jr. and Ray 2010); leaving college campuses should mean that a person is exposed to fewer activist opportunities, and result in less social justice involvement.

Thus, the final hypothesis is:

H3: As organizational opportunity drops after college, volunteer activist participation declines.

The literature on organizational opportunity focuses primarily on the role that social networks play in activist mobilization. That said, while the dense social networks in college likely lead to more activist participation, the physical structure of college campuses may also have direct effects on activist participation (Zhao 1998). In particular, social movement participation is particularly likely in neighborhoods that are centrally located and easy to access (Creasap 2016). By necessity, residential college campuses are perhaps the *most* centralized and accessible neighborhoods (Lofland 1968; Moffatt 1989); students can walk from their residence to the dining hall, class, and work. In this way, college campuses may provide organizational opportunities that are particularly easy to access, and which may be as important a form of organizational opportunity as the networks that form on campuses.

Methods

Given that most scholarship suggests that there is a decline in activism as individuals leave college, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the reasons social justice activists volunteer less. This analysis, therefore, requires a substantial number of student activists who will graduate from college in the near-term future, and follow-up data collection to investigate how their lives change. To that end, I administered questionnaires to 192 former college activists

from 15 different four-year colleges and universities. Participants attended college in multiple regions of the country, attended different institutional types, and participated in a variety of different social causes. This data collection began in Fall 2011, and has continued through Fall 2015. In addition, I also performed in-depth semi-structured interviews with a subset of activists, which I analyze to help interpret the quantitative findings.

Sampling

The initial sampling plan involved following a broad set of activists at several college campuses. Unlike many studies, this research design would compensate for a major design problem in social movements research, which is that nearly all of social movements research studies participation in a single movement or organization. Single movements or organizations have many unique characteristics with their own leadership structures, strategies and tactics, collective identities, and demographic characteristics (see: Corrigan-Brown 2012; Jasper 1997, for examples). Therefore, it is not always clear how to generalize from a single case study to social movement participation in general. In particular, many individual social movements draw relatively homogenous activists; gay rights organizations draw a disproportionate number of LGBT members, and groups focused on black consciousness tend to draw African-Americans. Thus, recruiting a broad spectrum of activists is ideal for a longitudinal study of college activists.

However, pilot testing revealed two major problems with recruiting people to a study on “activism.” First, students engaged in creating social change do not identify as “activists” and are uninterested in participating in a study about them; this echoes other research showing that the people sociologists call “activists” often do not self-identify as such (Bobel 2007; Corrigan-Brown 2012). The labels that potential participants used for themselves varied, but there was substantial agreement on how they classified the volunteer work they were performing: Nearly all participants believed that they were working for “social justice.” This type of language is very

common on college campuses, and defining the sample frame as “social justice participants” allowed for the broadest set of activist issue areas. Furthermore, the present population closely resembles Milkman’s (2017: 2) “new political generation” of social justice activists.

The second major problem is that there are no easily accessible lists of activists, except those held by organizations. The strongest designs tend to sample participants across a variety of organizations and movement types, but even those designs must base their individual-level sampling on organizational participation (e.g., Corrigan-Brown 2012). Thus, in order to define a population of people who are “social justice participants” it is necessary to first define people who are involved with “social justice organizations.” This also requires a definition of activist participation; many people “participate” by coming to a single meeting or rally. In contrast, the label “activist” is normally applied to more substantial commitments to an organization (e.g., Corrigan-Brown 2012; Jasper 1997; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988; Nepstad 2004).

To recruit participants, I therefore needed a definition of a “social justice participant” that was involved in a “social justice organization” that was consistent with prior definitions of volunteer activism. Therefore, I define a “social justice organization” (SJO) as a clearly defined group of individuals who work towards creating social, structural, or institutional change to remedy inequality or injustice. An individual who provides meaningful and visible contributions to a “social justice organization” is defined as a “social justice participant.” This definition provides a broad sampling frame that works across institutions, organizations, and social issues.

In concrete terms, this meant identifying every student group at a set of college campuses which worked towards systemic change to remedy inequality or injustice². Organizations that

² It is possible that there some bias from sampling from registered student groups, as opposed to those which meet without official college recognition. But although I did not *sample* any non-registered groups, participants who were involved with non-registered organizations entered their *participation* in non-registered groups in the survey. So

dealt with systems change but did not focus on unfair treatment of a beneficiary group are not included; similarly, organizations that focused on a beneficiary group but did not attempt systems change were also excluded. Then, I asked each group to nominate every single person in the group who (1) was graduating in Spring 2012 and (2) who had organized events or run a meeting for them. Overall, 161 of the 222 groups responded with a complete list of individuals who had been active in their organizations and their email addresses. I contacted all 341 potential participants³, and 192 (56.3%) elected to complete an online questionnaire. I provided no compensation for the participants, only to provide ongoing information about the project.

The result is an exceptionally diverse sample of activists although there are also some notable exclusions. More radical groups constituted a small but noticeable part of the sample; 13.61% of the sample was involved with labor, immigrant rights, anti-capitalist, or anti-American foreign policy groups. Groups that dealt with “identity politics” such as women’s, racial/ethnic minority, or LGBT rights were particularly common, with 43.23% of participants involved with one of these groups. Although popular media accounts suggest that “political correctness” movements concerned with “micro-aggressions” are taking over college social movements, only 8.85% of the sample was involved with groups specifically working on micro-aggressions or related issues. Not all groups had explicitly political foci; groups that opposed sexual assault and emphasized international human rights went out of their way to downplay

within the sample, there is no registered/non-registered bias in activist participation. Furthermore, I did discuss non-registered SJO participation with participants during semi-structured interviews, and it appears that non-registered groups drew their membership almost entirely from registered SJOs. So while there may be bias in sampling registered student groups, I do not think it is likely in this case.

³ Note that 161 groups nominated 341 participants, which would imply that most groups had two graduating activists. However, it is important to note that many groups had no graduating seniors at all, while there were 12 different groups that nominated more than five potential participants.

politics in their interviews, and a handful of the participants expressed libertarian or conservative viewpoints. These groups worked towards social change while actively eschewing political labels, and 21.47% participants were involved in one of these groups. Meanwhile, approximately 18.75% of the sample was involved in a group with some environmental focus, such as fair agricultural practices or community resistance to pollution. Overall, this sample represents the major movements of Milkman's (2017) generation of social justice activists. However, the sample does not include right-wing movements, or social movements that do not target inequality or injustice. The percentage of individuals involved in each group is listed in Table 2.1, and a more detailed breakdown of groups is listed in Appendix A.

The 15 separate college campuses also represent a wide range of geographic regions and institutional types. In order to have a sufficient sample of activists, I needed schools that had a sufficient number of social justice organizations (SJOs). I first selected schools that were identified as "elite," which comprise the bulk of social movement activity on college campuses (Van Dyke 1998). To ensure that the schools had comparable academic reputations, I first identified schools that had "elite" academic reputations among public flagship universities, private research institutions, and small liberal arts colleges by cross-referencing academic and selectivity rankings in the US News and World Report college guide and the Princeton Review (U.S. News and World Report. 2011; Franek, Meltzer, Maier, and Olson 2010). I sorted each of these into four separate regions of the country (northeast, southeast, upper midwest, and pacific coast) to ensure geographic diversity, and discarded the colleges outside of those regions. Then, I identified every school on that list with more than five but fewer than fifty SJOs listed on a regularly updated list of student organizations; schools with fewer than five SJOs or which did not frequently update their student organization pages were not included.

My final step was to select colleges within each region by looking for similar campus cultures within institutional types; for example, public universities would have similar campus cultures to each other, but not necessarily similar to small liberal arts colleges. Very few schools were discarded at this phase, since most do not update their student organization listings regularly. Based on the Princeton Review and U.S. News and World Report college guides, none of the schools had particularly high or low amounts of drinking, Greek life, or sports enthusiasm for their institutional type.

The substantial diversity of institutional types, regions, and issue areas in this study make this a sample that covers a wide range of student activists, and provides substantial coverage of social justice activists. However, there are several limitations to this sampling frame; these are common limitations in social movements research but they temper the generalizability of the findings to certain populations. First, the sampling frame only includes participants from elite four-year colleges. Activists at regional comprehensive universities or who attend two-year institutions have different campus experiences and styles of activism (Reyes 2015). Second, none of the colleges or universities are known for a religious affiliation, nor were there any historically black institutions. And although the research question of the present study asks about social justice activists—and there was still a great deal of political heterogeneity among the study participants—the participants do not work on traditional right-wing causes. Thus, the present findings may not generalize well to comprehensive and two-year universities, historically black universities and religious institutions, or to right-wing movement participants. This is a small exclusion list compared to the more common single-case study design, but activist persistence may be different in those settings.

The sampling frame also includes two other limitations. First, this study cannot examine why individuals develop into activists. All of the participants in this study are included because they have been active in their college SJO for some time already. Thus, the sample is ideal for examining how college graduation affects activist involvement, but not how people come to activism in the first place. Second, the data involves very few protest participants who are otherwise uninvolved in planning social change efforts. Identifying individuals who are involved in a movement for a few days per year is very difficult, and it is not even clear that they are the same population as the volunteer activists who are involved in planning and organizational decisions (as described in Corrigan-Brown 2012; Jasper 1997; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988; Morris 1981; Nepstad 2004). However, if protest participants and sustained activists are part of the same population, then the results here generalize to protest participation as well.

That said, the strengths of the present data outweigh the limitations. The present data set not only crosses institutional types and region, but also includes individuals involved in a wide variety of social causes. Although individuals at elite colleges and universities may be from wealthier families than the general population, the sample also includes participants from a variety of class and ethnic backgrounds. This is different than most single case-study designs, since individual movements often draw people with similar social backgrounds. Finally, the multi-year design of this study permits longitudinal analysis, which is different from most studies of activist participation. Overall, a multi-campus, multi-issue, and diverse longitudinal sample of Milkman's (2017) generation of social justice activists represents an important data source on a major social phenomenon. Appendix A contains further information on the demographic composition of the sample and participation across survey waves.

Variables of Interest

To analyze the impact of changing environmental conditions on volunteer activist participation, I operationalized activist participation as the number of hours spent volunteering for a social justice organization. As Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013: 552) argue, hours spent volunteering for an organization is a strong operationalization of behavioral commitment. Activist leaders have “an essentially unlimited set of possible tasks to undertake.” Because the activist leader proposes and organizes potential activities, the “universe” of available tasks is constrained only by a leader’s commitment, and this commitment is made visible by the number of hours a person spends volunteering for an organization.

I measure time spent with an organization broken into several domains (Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013); I also only ask participants to recall their activity over the prior 30 days (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009). This data collection method substantially reduces the cognitive burden on participants, reduces desirability bias, and increases accuracy of recall. Moreover, this approach provides estimates similar to time diary methods, which are often considered the best approach to measuring time usage (Havens and Schervish 2001).

I operationalize biographical unavailability as the number of hours a person spent on “required” activities each week, defined as number of hours worked, attendance at class and lab sections, studying for class, housework and childcare, and commuting to work and/or school. I asked participants to list how much time they spent on each activity per week (e.g., 0 hours, 0-1 hours, 2-5 hours, etc), coded each response at the midpoint, and summed the number of hours spent on “required” activities. Because the higher number of hours represents greater responsibilities, this is a measure of biographical unavailability rather than of availability; it is a much more direct measurement of biographical unavailability than measurements of parental, work, and marital statuses. I also utilize an alternative specification of biographical unavailability

in Appendix B to measure perceived social expectations around work, and also test for nonlinear relationships between biographical unavailability and activist participation; the findings do not differ from those presented here.

I operationalize social support by asking participants to name up to eight alters whose opinion they value and who they had some contact with in the previous 30 days. Then, I ask each participant how much each alter supports the ego's involvement in social justice efforts. Participants responded to the prompt "At this time, this person believes you should be putting time and effort into social justice participation" with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." I averaged the responses to measure perceived social support among trusted alters for each participant. There is substantial change in the alters nominated across waves; only 46% of the alters nominated at Wave 1 were also nominated as Wave 2, while only 56% of alters nominated at Wave 2 were also nominated at Wave 3.

I operationalize organizational opportunity by asking how many types of social justice events a person was invited to over the prior 30 days; these events range from "sexual assault" to "international human rights" to those on "ethnic/racial minority politics." Participants could mark that they had been invited up to eighteen different types of events in the previous 30 days, and specify whether they had been invited by someone they knew or someone they did not know. I added together the number of events the participant was invited to by people that they already knew, which measures access to a diversity of opportunities. Like Lin's (1999) position generator, this measurement taps the resources that an individual has in their network; in particular, it measures the extent to which social network ties connect participants to activist opportunity (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). This is a much more detailed and comprehensive measurement than prior studies of activist participation, which either ask about invitations to any

protest or an opportunity to a single organization (e.g., McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Schussman and Soule 2005)

It is important to note that while neither the measure for social support and activist opportunity are “true” network measures, both of these variables capture processes happening within social networks. Lin (1999) describes three different ways to measure network processes. The first measurement strategy involves a saturation survey, which covers all possible members of the network. The saturation survey permits a true network analysis, but it is also impossible to perform an adequate saturation survey in many contexts, including a multi-campus study of college activists. The second measurement strategy uses an egocentric name generator to identify alters. This is arguably the most popular network measurement because it is easy to administer, but because participants tend to nominate close friends and family it rarely includes weak ties. Close friends and family are particularly influential in providing advice and guidance, and thus egocentric name generators are appropriate for measuring social support but not resources embedded in weak ties. Finally, position generators identify the access that a participant has to resources. As a direct measurement of resources, position generators are an excellent choice for measuring opportunities embedded within social networks.

In nearly all situations, a saturation survey is the ideal data to study network-related processes, but it is not clear whether a different measurement strategy would affect the findings. Capturing every member of the network would help to identify social support from more and less influential alters. However, since participants respond to name generators by nominating more influential people—and by definition, they are the ones most likely to influence the participant—the egocentric network captures the key components of social support (Lin 1999).

Similarly, a saturation survey would enable a listing of every invitation throughout a participant's network. This would only change the results if participants actually received multiple invitations to a single type of event per month, and if the total number of invitations to events are not redundant resources and constitute more activist opportunity. This is doubtful since most research on social network indicates that redundant resources in social networks do not actually affect individual-level outcomes (Lin 1999); but if so, then the present measure might understate the relationship between opportunity and volunteer activism.

However, previous research has not even attempted to capture organizational opportunities across social movements, much less the number of different people who invited a person to a single event (e.g., McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Schussman and Soule 2005). There is good reason for this: Measures that ask participants to recount every single person who recruited them to an event—or every single event they were invited to—places too many cognitive demands on the participant (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009). Unless there is a way to observe the complete universe of event attendance and interactions—as researchers who study internet interactions are able to do—this measure is one of the most comprehensive measures of network-based organizational opportunity in the social movement literature. While complete network data would be ideal, we are interested in the *resources* embedded within networks instead of the network structure itself, and there is no feasible way to collect full network data. Lin (1999) concludes egocentric position-type generators are useful for this scenario.

I also included several other additional variables to account for other potential time-varying factors. First, I included a measure of invitations to events by someone the participant did *not* know, which helps rule out the possibility that “cold call” opportunities are driving volunteer activism. Second, I include the percentage of alters in the core discussion network who

the participant listed as “friends.” Third, I include two centered age variables to test whether there is an age effect on activist participation. Fourth, I include the number of hours participants sleep each night, since they may deal with increasing obligations by sleeping less.

Finally, I include dummy variables for undergraduate and graduate student status. Thus, the fixed-effects models present the effect of biographical unavailability, social support, and organizational opportunity net of all other changes associated with educational transitions. I also present several other models in Appendix B to test the robustness of the findings; in particular, I estimate a model that includes nonlinear effects of biographical availability. The findings in these supplemental analyses are substantively similar to the ones presented here. I present the descriptive statistics for each variable across waves in Table 2.2.

Quantitative Analysis

I use fixed-effects models to identify the effects of each predictor on activist participation. Fixed effects models work by averaging the score of each variable in the analysis across waves, but within participant; then, the model subtracts this average from the individual’s score at each wave. The transformed variable represents how much the score is above or below that person’s overall mean. If a person’s score on a particular variable (e.g., their sex) does not change over time, then the variable is equal to the mean at all time points; all time-invariant factors—including all time-invariant demographic and unobserved effects—drop out of the model (Halaby 2004). Therefore, all pre-existing characteristics such as race, sex, parental class, and any other pre-existing differences do not affect the dependent variables, removing a major source of endogeneity in statistical models. This is especially important because individual-level characteristics confound analyses of an individual’s social network ties (Mouw 2006).

I model the effects of changes in biographical unavailability, social support, and organizational opportunities on changes in activist participation with the following equation:

$$(Y_{it} - \bar{Y}_i) = \alpha + \beta_1(X_{bio_it} - \bar{X}_{bio_i}) + \beta_2(X_{sup_it} - \bar{X}_{sup_i}) + \beta_3(X_{opps_it} - \bar{X}_{opps_i}) + \beta_4(X_{frnd_it} - \bar{X}_{frnd_i}) + \beta_5(X_{ugrad_it} - \bar{X}_{ugrad_i}) + \beta_6(X_{grad_it} - \bar{X}_{grad_i}) + \beta_7(X_{cold_it} - \bar{X}_{cold_i}) + \beta_8(X_{sjopaid_it} - \bar{X}_{sjopaid_i}) + \beta_9(X_{age_it} - \bar{X}_{age_i}) + \beta_{10}(X_{agesq_it} - \bar{X}_{agesq_i}) + \beta_{11}(X_{sleep_it} - \bar{X}_{sleep_i}) + (\varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_i)$$

In all models, I account for potential clustering within schools. While fixed-effects models remove the influence of all time-invariant characteristics, standard errors may be incorrect for time-varying predictors because of serial correlation within schools; clustered standard errors address this problem (Cameron and Miller 2015). This is particularly important because individuals at the same school may have shared variance within activist networks. I perform all analyses in this study with Stata 13. In all models, I exclude one outlier observation⁴, although the substantive findings are the same with or without this observation.

Qualitative Interviews and Analysis

In addition to the quantitative data, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with participants in the study. During the first wave, I selected a sub-set of 31 activists to interview. I selected these 31 activists based upon geographic proximity so that I would be able to conduct the first interview face-to-face. All 31 activists attended a large public university in the southeastern United States; of these 31 activists, 27 of them agreed to participate in a 60-90 minute semi-structured interview; I followed up with these activists during Wave II and III. In addition, I expanded the interview pool by conducting face-to-face interviews with participants who were living in five metropolitan areas during Wave III. I selected two metropolitan areas in

⁴ One participant volunteered 249 hours over a 30 day period during college. This is far larger than any other observation in the sample, and the squared residual for this observation was approximately three times of any other data point (approximately .23). That said, the substantive findings are similar with or without this observation.

the southeast and one metropolitan area in the northeast, upper midwest, and west coast regions of the United States. I present the number of participants per wave in Table 2.3.

After I completed the interviews, I analyzed the interview data in order to understand the differences between undergraduate and post-undergraduate life. I first performed open coding on all interviews. Then, I performed “lumping” by grouping similar codes together, and “splitting” codes that described distinctly different phenomena. To provide analytic leverage on changes in activism and/or life circumstances, I repeatedly compared earlier interviews to later interviews by the same person. For individuals who I had only interviewed once, I instead compared interview data to survey data that they had completed in earlier waves. The analysis of life changes across waves gradually focused on changes in interaction and social life as the dominant feature of the transition between college and post-college life. Although different college campuses provide different styles of activism and campus life (Binder and Wood 2013; Reyes 2015), the similarities in the transition out of college were much more prominent than the differences across college campuses. I then use the qualitative analysis to help interpret the quantitative findings.

Findings

I present the findings in three parts to illustrate the changes in biographical unavailability, social support, and organizational opportunity and their effects on volunteer social justice activism. First, I provide descriptive statistics to demonstrate how biographical unavailability, social support, organizational opportunity, and participation in social justice activism changes once individuals graduate from a four-year college. While biographical unavailability and social support remain relatively stable after graduating, at college graduation individuals experience sudden drops in both activist participation and organizational opportunity, neither of which recover in the subsequent post-college years. Second, I turn to fixed-effects regression models to

estimate the changes in biographical unavailability, social support, and organizational opportunity on changes in activist participation. I find that organizational opportunity has a statistically significant effect on activist participation, net of all time-invariant personal characteristics; however biographical unavailability and social support are not statistically significant. Finally, I use the qualitative data to help explain the continued statistical significance of undergraduate student status, net of network-based organizational opportunity.

Descriptive Statistics: Changes in Activists' Lives at College Graduation

In Table 2.2, I present how activists' lives change after they graduate from a four-year college. In all graphs, Wave I represents the mean during the participants' last year in college (Fall 2011). Wave II represents the average score approximately 1.5 years later during Spring 2013; Wave III represents the average score during Spring 2014; and Wave IV represents the average score during Fall 2015.

Activist Participation. Conventional wisdom—and social movements scholars (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Saunders et al. 2012; Schussman and Soule 2005)—expect that individuals predisposed towards activism participate much more in college than afterwards. Consonant with prior expectations, the number of hours drops precipitously from 18.48 hours at Wave I to 3.83 hours at Wave II. Participation remains approximately the same from Wave II through Wave IV, with a high of 4.91 hours at Wave III. Changes in the standard deviation show a related story; the standard deviation drops from 26.60 at Wave 1 to 8.69 at Wave 2, slowly increasing back to 18.49. This suggests that as participants adjust to post-college life, some participants once again commit to extensive volunteer activism while most participants remain uninvolved.

Biographical Unavailability. Biographical unavailability is operationalized by the total number of “required hours” a person engages in. Participants perform 42.01 hours of required activities each week during their last year in college; this number increases to 48.08 hours at

Wave II, and to 50.8 hours by Wave IV. While this finding supports the notion that recent college graduates have more biographical unavailability than they did as undergraduates, the overall magnitude of the change is somewhat underwhelming. After all, qualitative descriptions of college life depict students with copious leisure time to engage in non-required activities (McCarthy and Zald 1973), and recent descriptions of the college life suggest that many students rarely need to work or even attend class (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013).

Why did students have so many required hours? Generally speaking, most students did *not* spend many hours working for pay, although 24.48% of the sample worked over 10 hours per week. The larger reason why many participants had a large number of required hours is that they took their coursework seriously; over half of the sample studied over 15 hours per week, with a quarter of the sample studying more than 25 hours per week at the beginning of the semester. In other words, the individuals who are likely to enter activism at a college campus are *not* the ones who have few responsibilities, but the students who take their other responsibilities seriously.

The third graph represents social support for participating in activism, which is an average of perceived support from trusted friends and family. On a scale of 1 to 5—where 5 represents the highest amount of social support—participants declined steadily from an average score of 3.8 at Wave I to an average score of 2.9 at Wave IV. However, while biographical unavailability and organizational opportunities decline immediately at college graduation, the decrease in perceived social support occurs more slowly. In fact, the greatest decline is not from Wave I to Wave II (3.85 to 3.54), but rather from Wave III to Wave IV (3.47 to 2.94).

The final graph presents organizational opportunity, measured by the diversity of events a person is invited to by someone that they know over the prior 30 days. Organizational opportunity declines immediately upon college graduation and remains relatively steady

afterwards; students are invited to 5.66 different types of events at Wave I, but recent college graduates are invited to 3.57 events at Wave II. In other words, the decline in activist participation roughly tracks with declines in organizational opportunity, with an immediate drop at Wave II and remaining steady during Waves III and IV.

Fixed-Effects Estimates of Volunteer Activist Participation

In this section, I perform fixed-effects regressions to estimate how changes in biographical unavailability, social support, and organizational opportunity are related to changes in activist participation. I present the results from the fixed-effects regression in Table 2.4; all results presented here are net of time-invariant characteristics (Halaby 2004). First, I estimate a fixed-effects regression where the only predictor is whether a participant is an undergraduate or graduate student (Model 1); undergraduate student status is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and substantively large, but graduate student status is not statistically significant.

In Model 2, I add biographical unavailability to Model 1, which is not statistically significant; thus, this model does not provide any evidence that biographical unavailability is the reason why undergraduate activists participate more in college. In Model 3, I estimate the effect of social support, net of other changes around college graduation; I find no evidence for the effect of social support on activism. In Model 4, I estimate the effect of organizational opportunity, net of all other changes between Wave 1 and Wave 2. Organizational opportunity has a statistically significant effect on activist participation ($p < 0.05$); this remains statistically significant in Model 5 after accounting for biographical unavailability and social support. Social support is also statistically significant in this model ($p < 0.05$); on the other hand, biographical unavailability remains non-significant.

Model 6 includes whether the participant works at an activist organization for pay, invitations to activist events from strangers, percentage of friends in their core network, age, and

hours of sleep per night; this accounts for the possibility that individuals are simply substituting paid activism for volunteer activism, as well as other possible spurious explanations. I find that working for pay at a social justice organization does reduce activist participation by approximately 8 hours ($p < 0.001$), that organizational opportunity ($p < 0.05$) remains statistically significant, but that social support is not statistically significant accounting for other potentially spurious factors. Undergraduate student status remains statistically significant across all models, but the effect size drops by one-half between Model 1 and Model 6. Still, it is larger than organizational opportunity; the predicted effect of organizational opportunity between Wave 1 and Wave 2 is only 1.637 hours, while the predicted change from graduation is 8.099.

In addition to the models presented here, I also performed several additional models to test the robustness of my findings. These include a tobit model to account for the fact that participants cannot volunteer negative hours of activism; an interaction between undergraduate student status and biographical availability to see if required hours impacts activism differently in college versus post college; an interaction of sex by biographical availability and educational status to determine whether women's responsibilities are larger than men's, given the same number of required hours; and two models that replicate Model 6 but excluding outliers, one excluding all observations more than 3 standard deviations away from the grand mean and another excluding all observations where the participant volunteered more than 30 hours per week for activist causes. Finally, I test for a non-linear relationship between biographical unavailability and activist participation. These models provide similar substantive findings to the ones presented here, and are presented in Appendix B.

In summary, changes in organizational opportunity have a statistically significant effect on social justice volunteering in the post-college transition, although the effect is not particularly

large. Meanwhile, biographical unavailability has no effect because participants at Wave I are primarily on the “professional” or “mobility” pathways and take their responsibilities seriously. As a result, actual changes in biographical unavailability between Wave I and Wave II are relatively small, and the small changes afterwards have little effect. Finally, social support is also not statistically significant; this is because activist behavior declines immediately upon college graduation, while social support for activism mostly drops between three and four years later.

Qualitative Findings

The quantitative findings here partially explain why activist participation drops suddenly upon college graduation—organizational opportunity is high during the undergraduate years but drops immediately from 5.66 to 3.57 upon college graduation, which constricts activist involvement. But undergraduate student status remains significant, and is approximately five times stronger than the effect of organizational opportunity. Furthermore, attending graduate school does *not* provide the same effect as undergraduate status. Thus, it is not student status that leads to greater activist commitment, but undergraduate student status.

To understand these findings, I analyzed the semi-structured interviews to determine the major differences between undergraduate and post-undergraduate life. The analysis suggests that any conception of organizational opportunity that focuses primarily on network ties will severely underestimate its effects on activism. This is because the physical layout of college campuses is designed to promote walking, which in turn leads to a unique social ecology where (1) undergraduates are in constant social interaction with each other but also where (2) they are always within walking distance of activist opportunities. People who graduate from college are no longer embedded in this social ecology, even if they return to graduate school.

As part of the interviews, I asked about the differences between their life in college and the present time. I frequently used a probe asking students what their day-to-day schedule was

like on a weekday. The response that I got most participants was substantively similar to this one, although students started or ended their day at different times:

I would wake up at 9 on a typical day, walk to class from my dorm, go to class...go to the [main quad], talk with people and have a conversation, get lunch, go back to another class, I would go to a student organization [meeting]...and then probably work on school work in the evening until probably 1 [AM].

This sounds like a mundane description of college life, but it includes an important clue to the “college effect”: For undergraduate students, walking is the standard method of transportation. Both on- and off-campus housing is located within easy walking distance of class, work, study locations, group meeting spaces, and other residences. The result is that the college student has the physical ability to participate in several different types of activities over the course of a day. As another participant pointed out:

I would go to a class and have a friend in the class, I would go to the library and end up seeing someone I knew there, I would have dinner with my two roommates, and then I would go to a meeting of a group that I was a part of in the evening and that would be a whole other group of people I knew and was friends with, and then maybe I'd go back to the library and see someone. So I think there were a lot more-- there were a lot more changes in the day, and so I was seeing people and having relationships in kind of each of those aspects of my life, that were a little more fluid.

There are two key implications of the “fluidity” of college life embedded in this participant’s response. The participant recognizes the first one, which is that they participate in a large number of different social interactions over the course of the day, which helps explain why college students are exposed to so many organizational opportunities. It is easy to stay involved in activist networks when you see people every day.

Some of my friends were quite literally just across the street. Like [a] two minute walk, maybe...I was also in a house with six other women. It was kind of constant community all the time. My other friends were just down the road...

While another participant reports:

I lived with two of my very good friends, and then my other close friends lived within like 10 minutes and we saw each other all of the time... So, I mean, I was hardly ever alone. I was always with friends, because we all lived so close together.

These two interviews represented a common experience amongst participants—in college, nearly everyone lives close to their peers. Participants would say that a trusted peer practically lived at their house, even if they did not live together. Other participants often reported living in the same suite, dorm room, or apartment as their closest friends; if they wanted to leave their room, they could find other friends upstairs or downstairs, or simply cross the street to socialize. In contrast, maintaining face-to-face interaction after college is much harder after college graduation, when socializing with other individuals has a real opportunity cost. For example, when I asked one participant how her social life was different now that she had graduated, she replied: “everybody lives in different places and you have to, there’s a certain amount of travelling...”

The physical density on college campuses breeds exceptionally dense social networks, which in turn leads to greater organizational opportunity. But focusing on the network effect misses something equally important: For undergraduate students, accessing group social interaction is *easy*, and participation in activism is a group social interaction. Because everyone lives within walking distance of each other, nearly every possible event is easy to get to. Thus, participating in a campus activist organization—like any other group interaction in college—is as simple as walking across campus. As Reyes (2015) implies, the vast majority of student activist meetings take place on campus, as do many campus events. Even when the targets of activism are off-campus, the events are often held close enough to campus so that participation is easy, as demonstrated by quotes from three separate participants about their college activism:

I was part of the [protest]...we marched from [the quad] to the [building just off campus]...

We're like "let's check out [organization]"...we're like "it's walking distance, let's just see" so we went down [the street just off campus] which is where they meet...

[W]e do direct campus or community organizing and have things like our protest that we had on the corner of [two streets adjoining campus]...

The physical proximity of an activist opportunity is not a network effect, although in this case it co-occurs with a dense social network that also facilitates participation. Nor is it biographical availability, which is about personal responsibilities that preclude involvement. Instead, physical proximity is a structural characteristic of residential and urban/campus planning that substantially lowers the cost of participation. For example, one participant explained how she was able to get her entire group of activists to one location for an unexpected meeting *in the middle of final exams* to prepare for a major campus. It is difficult to imagine this occurring without all members living in close proximity to each other:

The t-shirts came in late and so we only had like one night...[we had] to package them for individual groups and then distribute them all across campus. And we had a thousand of them and we had to sort them... "[this group] wants 37 small and 2 medium and 3 x-larges..." and it was the day of [the event], we had to tell everyone the bad news that they'd just came in...and we all met at one person's apartment [that evening]. I brought the food and someone brought the coffee and we all sorted shirts for like, until midnight. And we divided up the work so some people would be doing their homework and other people would be sorting and then we'd change.

Because graduate students spend considerable time on college campuses, we might expect them to benefit from the physical density of college campuses as well. But this overlooks a key difference between undergraduate and graduate life: A substantial number of graduate students do not live within walking distance of their college campus, and even if a graduate student activist lives close to a college campus his or her friends usually do not. As one person who stayed in the same city for graduate school said:

Now, I'm kind of on opposite ends of [town from my friends]. It's more like 15 minutes to get there [by car]... I have other friends who are in [a nearby city], and other friends still that are in [a third town nearby].

When graduate students live farther away from campus, going to an on-campus event is higher cost. Furthermore, if enough graduate students live far away from campus, then the dense social network of undergraduate life never forms. Undergraduate student life is a powerful predictor of activist participation because it combines (1) dense social networks with (2) easily accessible organizational opportunities. One participant summarized both the network and proximity effects when she said:

On a college campus it's very convenient because you constantly have people running around with fliers, and protests and whatnot, all the time. You know, you have awareness events all the time, [protest] events all the time. So the opportunities are just immense.

Discussion

Why does college social justice activism decline after college graduation? Biographical availability is the conventional explanation because it is supported by folk theory about the aging process and is consistent with life course principles. However, when students graduate from college, they not only experience biographical unavailability, but also changes in social support and organizational opportunity. Thus, I use descriptive statistics, fixed-effects regression, and semi-structured interviews to explain why former student activists in Milkman's (2017) generation of social justice activists may suddenly cease participating in social movements. The findings suggest that moving away from the dense physical environment and social networks of college reduces organizational opportunity, which causes a decline in activist participation. Changes in social support and biographical availability have no statistically significant effect.

The main finding is that changes in organizational opportunity plays a role in activist participation, while biographical availability does not. This is contrary to research that

operationalizes student status as biographical availability (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; McCarthy and Zald 1973; Saunders et al. 2012; Schussman and Soule 2005), and contrary to life-history interview evidence on the importance of biographical availability in activist participation (Klatch 1999; White 2010). Thus, the “student” effect identified in previous research probably represents physical proximity and network effects, not biographical availability.

The reason why biographical availability is not statistically significant is because contemporary college activists have much less biographical availability than previously assumed. Current college students who spend the majority of their college career intoxicated are not the students most likely to be involved in activist efforts; the students who are highly involved with either work or school are the ones likely to be involved in activism. As a result, college graduation does not lead to substantial changes in biographical availability, and therefore does not affect activist participation in the years after college graduation. Furthermore, it is important to note that life history interviews suffer from a particular kind of bias; individuals constantly reconstruct their biographical narratives based on their present circumstances (Andrews 1991). Since age norms suggest that recent college graduates should focus primarily on work instead of activism, participant discussions of biographical availability could be “anticipated situational [responses to] questioned conduct,” or part of a “vocabulary of motive” (Mills 1940: 905).

While graduating from college does not impose quantitatively greater time commitments, it does remove individuals from a physically- and network-dense environment. The fixed-effects regression model provides some support for the organizational opportunity hypothesis. However, the quantitative measurement of organizational opportunity is network-based, and thus does not include the substantial direct impact of physical environment on activist participation. The combined quantitative and qualitative analysis suggests that students live in dormitories or

student neighborhoods close to campus, which creates both dense social networks and also makes each organizational opportunity easier to access (Chambliss and Takacs 2014; Lofland 1968; Moffatt 1989; Reyes 2015; Zhao 1998). In other words, college graduation removes activists from a social space that is both physically and socially dense, and recent college graduates go from many local social justice opportunities to fewer, less-accessible ones after graduation. The opportunities do not increase or become more accessible in the subsequent post-college years, explaining the lower level of volunteer activism after college.

This study explains why college social justice activists scale back social movement volunteering after graduation, and may explain activist participation in other settings as well. However, there are some questions about how well the results generalize to other populations. The sampling frame does not include traditional right-wing movements, regional commuter schools, HBCUs, or colleges with a strong religious identity; analysts should be cautious when extending the findings to those contexts. This study also does not tell us much about how people become activists for the first time; all of the people in the sample were activists at the time of entry. While the present sample includes substantial diversity across institutions, movements, organizations, and participants, future research is needed to investigate how institutions and organizations shape non-activists into being activists at different stages of the life course.

With these limitations in mind, the present study has three implications for scholars studying social movements and one major implication for social movement organizations. First, the present findings suggest returning to theoretical insights from Zhao (1998) about the spatial ecology of activism, and how physical environments inhibit or support social movement activity (see also: Creasap 2016). The walkable, physically dense layout of college campuses and residential life indirectly stimulates activist participation by forging dense networks (Chambliss

and Takacs 2014; Lofland 1968; Moffatt 1989; Reyes 2015). However, the physical ecology of college campuses is dense enough that these opportunities are also accessible. The fixed-effects regression model captures a moderate, direct effect of network effects on activist participation; at the same time, the qualitative analysis suggests that the physical environment makes organizational opportunities accessible on college campuses. This might also explain why off-campus social movements are often centered in urban spaces, where walkable and population-dense spaces facilitate activist networks and participation (Creasap 2016). Future quantitative research should explicitly measure physical distance between home, work, and activist opportunities to more precisely capture this effect.

Second, biographical availability does not explain activist participation in the transition out of college, which casts doubt on the utility of the construct. The theory of biographical availability was developed in concert with the notion that college students have few time pressures, but college student activists have more responsibilities today than past eras. While individuals at other stages of the life course might still experience biographical unavailability, the more likely culprit is that life course status changes are too blunt an instrument to measure biographical availability. Becoming a parent, having children, entering a new job and leaving school capture a mixture of biographical availability, changes in networks, physical context, organizational opportunity, and social support. These should be measured separately whenever possible, rather than assuming that life course statuses imply a single life circumstance.

That said, future scholarship should investigate biographical availability at other parts of the life course. It is logical to assume that at some point, time pressures do reduce activist participation. There are only so many hours in a single day, and as required hours increase activists should eventually run out of any discretionary time. This study shows that at a

minimum, an average increase from 42 to 48 required hours is not enough to dissuade activist involvement. It is possible that larger increases in required hours—perhaps associated with taking a second job or having a child—would reduce discretionary activities. Similarly, it is possible that a six-hour increase might reduce activism when a person is already overwhelmed by time pressures. A person who has approximately 42 hours of responsibilities might find that six more hours does not disrupt the rest of their life, but at 70 required hours they might find six additional hours too difficult to manage. While supplementary analyses do not support a nonlinear relationship between biographical availability and activism (Appendix B, Table B2), this might be more apparent in a sample where participants transition into parenthood. In general, we need further research on the relationship between required time pressures and discretionary activities of all types; a more general analysis of the relationship between work, family, and organized but voluntary activities could help us understand the relationship between required hours and activism. But if increased time commitments at later life course transitions do not predict changes in activism, then social movements scholars should eliminate biographical availability as an explanation of activist participation.

Third, although previous scholarship has noted the importance of social support to activist participation (Jasper 1997; Nepstad 2004), it is not statistically significant in this study. There are two ways to interpret this finding. On one hand, because prior scholarship on social support in movements is mostly qualitative (e.g., Jasper 1997; Klatch 1999; Nepstad 2004), it cannot remove variation associated with biographical unavailability and organizational opportunity. On the other hand, qualitative research on social support in movements can identify social support processes in a dynamic way that I cannot capture with a regression model. The descriptive statistics could support either interpretation, with declines in social support occurring

after declines in activism. Nepstad (2004) posits a cyclical relationship between activism and social movement support, but her process takes place over a shorter period of time than a yearly survey; future research should collect data on social support over a span of weeks instead of years, which permits modeling social support as a cycle.

Finally, this study has one major implication for social movement strategy, particularly groups working with the new wave of social justice activists (Milkman 2017). The recruitment, development, and maintenance of volunteer activists is a major goal for social justice organizations, but the present results show that a large number of committed volunteers are routinely exiting during the transition out of college. Previous research and conventional folk wisdom suggests that this is inevitable due to increasing time pressures, but this study finds no support for this position. According to this study, the primary reason why social justice activists stop volunteering after college is because they are not presented with opportunities. Thus, social movements need to re-think how they present activist opportunities to millennials. One strategy could involve working with other organizations to build a shared network of activists where opportunities can be shared freely. Another complementary strategy would keeping in touch with college students during the transition out of college to ease them into post-college activist networks and geographic spaces. Finally, SJOs should be more attentive to the selection of targets and strategy that is geographically proximate to millennial activists. This sort of attention to the infrastructure of social life and the people moving through it would be a change for many movement organizations, but would result in a much more vibrant social movement sector.

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Table 2.1: Percentage of Sample Involved in Each Issue Area

Issue Area	Examples of Organizational Focus	Percent of Sample Involved with Issue Area
Radical Left	Labor, anti-US foreign policy, anti-capitalism	13.61%
Identity Politics	Feminist, racial or ethnic minority, and LGBT rights/politics	43.23%
Apolitical	International human rights, anti-sexual assault	21.47%
Environmental Justice	Community resistance to pollution, fair agriculture	18.75%
Anti-Oppression Awareness	Teaching about "isms", promoting dialogue between groups	8.85%
Other	Local community organizing, multi-issue coalitions	15.10%

Table 2.2: Descriptive Statistics by Wave

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total Hours Volunteering with SJOs	18.48	26.60	3.83	8.69	4.91	13.13	4.14	18.49
Undergraduate Status	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Graduate Student Status	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.40	0.33	0.47	0.32	0.47
Biographical Unavailability	42.01	15.83	48.08	17.52	48.44	19.89	50.80	19.06
Social Support for Activism	3.85	0.72	3.54	0.68	3.47	0.81	2.94	1.10
Organizational Opportunity (Ties)	5.66	4.39	3.57	3.84	3.25	3.69	3.75	4.76
Friend Percentage of Core Network	0.55	0.25	0.51	0.21	0.47	0.23	0.43	0.23
Works at SJO	0.12	0.33	0.13	0.34	0.16	0.37	0.16	0.37
Organizational Opportunity (Non-Ties)	2.29	3.37	2.02	3.72	1.54	3.21	2.38	4.10
Age (Centered)	-1.95	0.88	0.08	1.01	1.02	0.90	1.99	0.85
Age-Squared (Centered)	4.57	2.40	1.02	4.64	1.84	5.70	4.68	7.01
Hours of Sleep Per Night	6.63	1.05	7.10	1.00	5.16	1.01	5.13	1.05

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 2.3. Description of Participation at Different Waves

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Summary
Survey	N=192	N=125	N=132	N=114	67% of original sample completed 3 or more waves; 80% of sample completed at least two waves
Interview	N=27 at one university	N=18 from original sample	N=20 participants from original sample; N=19 from survey across 5 different metro areas	None	84 interviews; 46 unique participants

Table 2.4. Fixed Effects Models Predicting Hours of Volunteer Activist Participation

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Undergraduate Status	15.12*** (2.133)	13.79*** (1.716)	13.46*** (2.011)	12.91*** (1.830)	10.60*** (1.752)	8.099* (3.632)
Graduate Student Status	-0.247 (2.225)	-0.544 (2.338)	0.215 (2.138)	-0.827 (2.235)	-0.505 (2.275)	-3.988 (2.927)
Biographical Unavailability		-0.197 (0.118)			-0.174 (0.114)	-0.188 (0.121)
Social Support for Activism			3.190 (1.562)		2.744* (1.215)	3.228 (2.092)
Organizational Opportunity (Ties)				0.832* (0.322)	0.743* (0.313)	0.791* (0.269)
Friend Percentage of Core Network						1.274 (8.620)
Works at SJO						-9.533*** (2.018)
Organizational Opportunity (Non-Ties)						0.559 (0.427)
Age (Centered)						-0.555 (1.031)
Age-Squared (Centered)						0.0223 (0.193)
Hours of Sleep Per Night						-2.042 (1.432)
Intercept	4.031*** (0.711)	13.74* (5.777)	-6.618 (5.190)	0.988 (1.574)	0.951 (3.215)	12.92 (11.64)
N of Person-Waves	564	564	559	562	558	557
N of Participants	192	192	191	192	191	190
R-Squared	0.191	0.221	0.205	0.209	0.246	0.290

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Operationalization of Variables

Undergraduate Status: Dummy Variable

Graduate Student Status: Dummy Variable

Biographical Unavailability: Required Hours

Social Support for Activism: Average of Alters Support from Core Network

Organizational Opportunity (Ties): Diversity of Event Invitations from Known Others

Friend Percentage of Core Network: Percent of Alters Listed as "Friends"

Organizational Opportunity (Non-Ties): Diversity of Event Invitations from Strangers

Works at SJO: Employed for Pay at Social Justice Organization

CHAPTER 3: PREDICTING VOLUNTEER AND PAID ACTIVISM IN THE TRANSITION OUT OF COLLEGE

Mary and Angela⁵ were college activists who volunteered for community organizing groups, majored in a social science at public universities, and graduated in Spring 2012—but their personal trajectories before and after college were otherwise very different. Mary comes from a well-educated and upper-middle class home. After college, Mary moved to a new city to take low-paid internships for activist causes, interspersed with low-wage work in the service industry. She eventually parlayed these internship experiences into multiple offers from social movement organizations, and was working on an organizing campaign at one three years later.

On the other hand, Angela comes from a working class family; neither parent earned a four year college degree and they had fewer financial resources. Angela exhausted her savings improving her Spanish-language skills in a foreign country, and shortly thereafter moved back in with her parents. Angela had a very difficult time finding work, but had the encouragement of her parents to attend graduate school. However, when she moved to a new city for graduate school, she was teased by her classmates for her radical political beliefs. To find others like her, she sought activist causes in the community and on campus, and eventually became involved with a radical gay rights organization despite identifying as heterosexual.

There are some notable differences in Mary and Angela's stories. They come from different class and ethnic backgrounds, one entered graduate school while the other did not, and

⁵ Names and minor details changed to preserve anonymity.

one continued to volunteer for activist causes while the other transitioned into paid activism. But Mary and Angela have several things in common as well. They graduated at the same time with similar academic credentials and wanted to continue activism, but found that opportunities to continue activism were not easy or simple after college. They had to put effort into finding activist opportunities—taking low-paid internships and learning about community-based organizations—that others could or would not do.

Why do some college activists continue volunteering or transition into paid activism, while many others simply stop altogether? The topic of activist participation remains a central question in social movements research, but studies of activist participation rarely compare the predictors of paid and volunteer activist participation. This is true when studying large social movement organizations with a mix of volunteers and paid staff (Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013), when researchers briefly note that a participant has moved from volunteer to paid participation (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Lichterman 1996; McAdam 1988), or when researchers focus extensively on organizations with no volunteer activists or no paid staff (Fisher and McInerney 2012; Jasper 1997). To date, we only know that most paid activists used to be volunteer activists, and that economic needs can sometimes impede transitioning into paid activism (Oliver 1983); but since the predictors of volunteering are not equivalent to those that predict occupational attainment, it is likely that the factors predicting continued volunteer activism do not predict the transition into paid movement work (Johnson and Mortimer 2011; Wilson 2000).

With little theory or empirical findings to guide us, I proceed in three steps. First, I distinguish paid from volunteer activism, while also noting the substantial similarities between them. Then, I draw on a broad range of research that shows how interests and resources are

embedded in family socioeconomic and educational background, and which should predict volunteer or paid activism instead of dropping out entirely. My theory is simple: An individual must have an *interest in* and the *resources to* participate in a social movement, but that different types of interests and resources lead to different types of participation. I test the hypotheses using a new data set that follows former college activists after they graduate from a four-year university and transition into paid employment or graduate school. The findings show that those who attend graduate school are more likely to continue volunteering with a social movement, and those who attend private research universities are less likely to continue volunteering. However, different factors predict those who transition to paid activism instead of dropping out; these participants come from more highly-educated families, tend to major in the social and behavioral sciences, and are less likely to concurrently attend graduate school. The findings underscore the need for further research on the different interests and resources needed to participate in social movements, as well as the labor market conditions of “moral” or “ideological” jobs (Kolb 2014: 22; Thompson and Bunderson 2003: 574).

Conceptualizing Activist Participation

To date, most previous research focuses on volunteer activism instead of paid staff positions, and does not adequately theorize the differences between them. To be fair, volunteer and paid activists often have similar ideological orientations, and complete similar tasks such as planning protests and recruiting new members. However, social movement volunteering requires the ability to find an appropriate opportunity and an interest in participating, while the contractual relationship between paid staff members and social movement organizations should make actually obtaining a social movement job more difficult than simply volunteering.

Volunteer activism involves doing “productive work” as part of an organized effort to change structural or institutional relationships, with no financial compensation provided (Musick

and Wilson 2007; Wilson and Musick 1997). In lieu of payment, activists participate to advance their ideological beliefs, create social change, and enjoy a sense of solidarity with others (Jasper 1997; Nepstad 2004). Volunteer activists are often the primary catalysts of social movement groups; they stage and attend protests and media events, go door-to-door to discuss issues with neighbors, and plan overall campaign strategy (Binder and Wood 2013; Jasper 1997; Kleidman 1994; Lichterman 1996; Oliver 1983). McAdam's (1988) Freedom Summer participants were critically important to movement building by developing political consciousness in the local community. Volunteer activists are also sometimes involved with administrative tasks such as fundraising and strategic planning (Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Lichterman 1996).

While activist volunteering is not representative of nonprofit volunteering, both are governed by the same relationship between volunteer and organization: Participants give their time to an organization without an expectation of paid compensation (Musick and Wilson 2007; Wilson and Musick 1997). This means that obtaining a volunteer activist position is similar to other types of volunteering; for the most part, it simply involves finding out about the volunteer opportunity, often through social network ties; judging the opportunity an adequate fit; and then showing up. Like other types of volunteering, activism can either involve a short-term commitment like a protest or a long-term commitment such as serving on a committee (e.g., Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Jasper 1997; Schussman and Soule 2005). The volunteer has an ability to scale back commitments when they choose, something paid activists cannot do without quitting the job. However, volunteers often have to juggle the responsibilities to their job with their ideological calling, and obtaining a paid position can satisfy this problem in a way that volunteering cannot (Lichterman 1996).

Paid activism shares many characteristics with volunteer activism. The most important similarity across volunteer and paid activism is that both types of participants are often motivated by moral concerns (Fisher and McInerney 2012; Oliver 1983). In fact, most paid activists start as volunteer activists, and then transition to an employment relationship over time (Oliver 1983). Volunteer and paid activists share many similar job tasks; paid activists plan protests and media events, go door-to-door to discuss issues with neighbors, pass out flyers to passersby, recruit and develop new members, and are responsible for planning and executing tactical decisions (Feekin and Widenor 2003; Fisher 2006; Fisher and McInerney 2012; Foerster 2003; Kleidman 1994; Oliver 1983; Robinson and Hanna 1994; Van Dyke and Dixon 2013). In some cases, paid activists perform major administrative tasks such as ensuring legal compliance, fundraising, and hiring paid staff (Kleidman 1994; Oliver 1983; see also: Staggenborg 1988).

Paid activism is a job as well as an ideological commitment, which means that obtaining one is a competitive process that provides monetary rewards. Unfortunately, many activist jobs are low-paid (Foerster 2003). Entry-level salaries are particularly low, or are even tied to the worker's fundraising ability (Fisher 2006). The opportunities for pay increases are also poor; O'Donnell's (1995) study of experienced community organizers in Chicago found that organizers earned approximately the same as local social workers, but worked 55 hours per week. Thus, many of the people who take social movement jobs may rely on alternative income streams—such as partner's income or family wealth—to cushion against sudden financial shocks.

However, not everyone who wants a paid social movement job can have one. Social movement organizations must be more selective about who to hire than who they accept as a volunteer because they do not have funds to pay everyone. Paid activism is attractive to

politically-minded individuals because it provides “ideological currency” or “moral wages”—the opportunity to advance a cause that the worker is passionate about (Kolb 2014: 22; Thompson and Bunderson 2003: 574). Since many young adults are searching for both an identity and career in the early post-college transition (Shanahan 2000), simultaneously pursuing activism and employment is particularly attractive (Foerster 2003; Mondros and Wilson 1990).

Lichterhan (1996:167-169) provides an example of how paid activism can help resolve both economic and moral concerns with the case of “Carl.” Carl was a long-time environmental activist who was pressured by his wife to stop volunteering for his local activist group, so that he could help contribute economically to his growing family. However, shortly after he quit his volunteer position, he was able to satisfy both his own desire to create change and his family’s economic needs by taking a paid organizing position with the local Green party.

With the exception of Oliver (1983), previous research has either ignored or glossed over the differences between volunteer and paid activism. While paid activism shares several characteristics with volunteer activism, labor market competition and the low pay make it harder for some activists to transition to a social movement job. Thus, while there is very little research on the differences between volunteer and paid activism, factors that influence social movement participation, volunteering and occupational choice and attainment may all play a role. In the next section, I theorize how these factors affect activist participation with two simple propositions: Continued activist participation requires both an *interest* in an issue and the *resources* to participate, but the types of interests and available resources that predict continued involvement should differ by mode of participation.

Interest, Resources, and Type of Activist Participation

Social movements scholars posit that potential activists require both an interest in a movement and the resources to participate, although this notion is almost exclusively applied to

the study of volunteer activists. Prior research suggests that individuals become interested in a social movement because they hold grievances, or because they have been involved in protest previously and enjoy participating in a movement (Jasper 1997; Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Milkman 2017). However, potential activists usually need to have an interpersonal or organizational connection to a movement to become involved, as well as the means to physically appear at a protest or organizational meeting (Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; McAdam 1988; Schussman and Soule 2005).

I follow the interests-resources tradition by arguing that (1) an interest in certain activist opportunities and the resources to follow them predict which individuals stay involved in activism instead of drop out. However, I argue that there are (2) substantial differences in the types of interests and resources across class background and educational experiences; that (3) different types of interests and resources are more likely to lead toward volunteer or paid activism; and that therefore we should (4) see substantial differences in the type of activist participation across demographic groups. I apply this framework to activism in the transition out of college below.

Interests and Resources by Class Background

To illustrate how interests and resources might affect type of activist participation in the transition out of college, let us examine how young adults from high-SES families might have a greater interest in—and the resources to pursue—paid activism. Because paid activism combines ideological commitments with a low-paid contractual relationship, we would expect that only people who expect to enact their values at work would select into this pathway. Lichterman (1996) provides evidence that middle-class activists are particularly likely to align their activist and work values, which means that middle-class activists should be particularly likely to seek out paid activist work. This is consistent with the broader literature on class differences in

work values, which emphasizes that greater parental educational attainment decreases the desire for monetary compensation but increases a job that provides influence (Johnson 2002; Johnson and Mortimer 2011). Because the goal of social movements is to influence the public or decision-makers, we would expect that parental class background should increase the likelihood of interest in paid activist work.

Additionally, because activist work is low-paid, we would expect that class background would also limit some participants from transitioning into paid work. Young adults from higher class backgrounds receive more financial assistance from parents, which would help them navigate the transition into the low-paid and insecure activist work career (Furstenberg 2010). This ongoing financial support from middle and upper-class parents could subsidize low-paid and insecure jobs in the social movement sector, as well as geographic mobility to search for activist jobs across the country. In contrast, recent college graduates from lower-SES backgrounds probably cannot rely on consistent economic support, and are more constrained when moving into low-paid work in the social movement sector.

H1: Individuals with more highly-educated parents are more likely to transition to paid activism than those from lower-SES backgrounds.

On the other hand, it is not clear whether individuals who come from higher-SES backgrounds will be more likely to continue volunteer activism. Individuals who have previously volunteered for a social movement have already demonstrated interest in volunteer activism regardless of class background; therefore, interest in continuing volunteer activism should not differ by social class. Similarly, awareness of opportunities is the primary ingredient in activist participation, and while there are some differences by educational level in being asked to protest (Schussman and Soule 2005), it seems equally plausible that participants from lower-SES

backgrounds just have connections to *different types* of social movement organizations (Lichterman 1996). This is especially true among recent college graduates, who would have the same educational level and access to similar peer social networks (Stevens, Armstrong, and Arum 2008). Therefore, individuals from higher-SES family backgrounds are unlikely to have greater interest in activist volunteering among college graduates, and the resources they possess may not be relevant to getting involved in volunteer activism.

Interests and Resources by College Experience

Greater education predicts more volunteer activism over time (Corrigall-Brown 2012), but this is not particularly relevant to activists making the transition out of college since, by definition, they all have the same level of education. However, educational experiences could still have a substantial effect on the interest and resources to either transition into paid activism, or to continue volunteer activism. In particular, we would expect that the type of institution an individual attends could have an effect on sustained volunteer activism, while college major could have an impact on career pathways involving activism.

First, there are substantial qualitative differences in activist behavior across educational institutions, which could impact interest and ability to continue volunteer activism. The “style” of activism at private universities and liberal arts colleges is squarely focused on educating other members of the college community; in contrast, at larger public universities the participants practice a more confrontational and aggressive style of activism, and also are more likely to select off-campus targets (Binder and Wood 2013; Reyes 2015). What this means is that at many public universities, we would expect that activists are more likely to practice the community-focused style of activism commonly found outside of college campuses (for examples see: Jasper 1997).

How might attending a public university increase interest and ability to participate in volunteer activism after college? Practicing a style of activism that is more community-focused issues suggests that public school activists have greater interest in the types of activism they will encounter after college. There are certainly activists at public universities who prefer insular and campus-focused education, as well as activists at private universities who are more interested in community-focused activism. However, public university graduates are more likely interested in post-college activist volunteering because many have already had sustained experiences with similar campaigns. This conjecture is bolstered by two separate findings. First, Corrigan-Brown's (2012) finding that qualitative differences in the style of activism practiced in early adulthood predicts patterns of longer-term involvement in other groups. Activists involved in local campaigns such as union drives and housing advocacy were less likely to shift into other activist groups, while activists in multi-issue activist groups were comfortable in a variety of activist settings. Second, people tend to select into specific activist efforts that accord with their biographical history, even within the same movement (Jasper 1997). For example, within the anti-nuclear movement one protestor's stature in the local community led to direct petitions of county commissioners, while protestors from outside the local community drew on their experience as mothers to "attack hazardous waste sites" in an aggressive display of anger (Jasper 1997: 105-107).

It is also possible—although somewhat less likely—that public university graduates have knowledge of activist volunteering opportunities that private school graduates do not. Because public university graduates may have prior experience in community-focused campaigns, they may already have contacts in the post-college activist community. Having connections to post-college activism should increase their total knowledge of opportunities. Because public

university graduates are more likely to have an interest in post-college activism, as well as knowledge of specific opportunities, we would expect the following:

H2: Graduating from a flagship public university increases the likelihood of post-college volunteer activism.

Second, college major could indicate both interest in paid activism, as well as help participants get a job with social movement organizations. Previous research suggests that individuals are particularly likely to obtain jobs in fields related to their undergraduate majors, no matter what that major is, and there is evidence that community organizers are drawn primarily from social science fields (O'Donnell 1995; Robst 2007). This is probably due to selection; individuals who are interested in post-college activism may think that they can get a job “saving the world” if they major in a social science, and therefore college major may tell us about the participant’s post-college interests. However, it is also possible—although not as likely—that participants who major in a social science are better able to signal an interest in activist work to potential social movement employers. Thus, we would expect social science majors to use their academic credential as a resource in the job market, making them more attractive to social movement organizations. In contrast, individuals who spent their college years performing scientific experiments or analyzing literature might not be able to signal that they are interested in paid activism. As a result, we would predict that:

H3: Majoring in a social science increases the likelihood of transitioning to paid activism

Entering Graduate School

Finally, we would expect that entering graduate school makes it more difficult to obtain a paid activist position, but easier to continue volunteering with activist organizations. First, graduate programs often require a substantial time commitment, which makes it difficult to

simultaneously hold a full-time job of any sort. Like many other post-undergraduate jobs, activist jobs often require time commitment during regular business hours, which would make it difficult to simultaneously attend class and work at the job. In fact, many activist jobs often require time commitments during regular hours and during the evenings, and overall workers are often susceptible to burnout because of the intensity of the job (Feekin and Widenor 2003; O'Donnell 1995; Rooks 2003). It may be very difficult balance paid activism with graduate school; instead, graduate students probably work on or near campus since university employers are used to working around student class schedules. This means that we would expect that:

H4: Attending a post-graduate institution decreases the likelihood of transitioning to paid activism.

On the flip side, we would expect that graduate students would have better resources to volunteer with social justice organizations. This is because graduate students are more integrated into the life and rhythm of college campuses, which are often centers of social movement activity (Van Dyke 1998). With activist organizations dealing with international human rights, labor issues, ethnic minority political causes, and gay rights, graduate students are in close physical proximity to a wide variety of volunteer activist opportunities (Biddix and Park 2008; Einwohner and Spencer 2005; Reyes 2015; Rhoads 1998; Soule 1997). While graduate students may not have any more interest in getting involved in on-campus activism than those who do not attend graduate school, their physical proximity to activist causes is a resource that other college graduates do not have. As a result, we should expect that:

H5: Attending a post-graduate institution increases the likelihood of transitioning to volunteer activism.

Accounting for Potential Spuriousness

In addition to the interests and resources that vary by class and educational background, there are a number of other factors that could covary with paid and volunteer activism and produce spurious associations. For instance, there is some evidence that participation in social movements and volunteering varies across both race and sex (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011; Corrigan-Brown 2012; McVeigh and Smith 1999; Wilson 2000; Wilson and Musick 1997). Additionally, the amount of college debt is likely to covary with family class background, type of college institution, and graduate school attendance; if it also is related to either volunteer or paid activist participation, then it could cause a spurious relationship. Moreover, health limitations can pose a serious barrier to volunteering behavior; although volunteering tends to improve health in later life, at younger ages health outcomes are primarily a barrier to volunteer participation (Li and Ferraro 2006).

Finally, it is important to note that high-profile activist campaigns are period-specific and often appeal to specific groups of people. Campaigns that mobilize African-Americans should lead to a higher rate of African-American volunteer activism, even after accounting for class and educational background. Since there was a major protest wave surrounding marriage equality for same-sex couples in the past few years (Ghaziani, Taylor, and Stone 2016), we would expect that self-identified gay, lesbian, and queer individuals would be particularly likely to volunteer for an activist group in recent samples of activists. Omitting this variable would lead to spurious results if non-heterosexual individuals are more likely to attend specific types of schools, or major in specific disciplines.

In summary, we would expect that while interests and resources lead to activist participation, it is likely that different types of interests and resources lead to different types of activist participation. To the extent that these interests and resources differ by class background,

educational experience, and student status, we would expect differences in activist participation among recent college graduates, net of other potentially spurious explanations.

Methods

The present study investigates which college activists continue volunteering for activist organizations after college, which ones transition into paid activism, and which ones cease activism entirely. Therefore, the ideal data would include information on both voluntary and paid activism over time, as well information about the individual's demographic characteristics. In particular, I hypothesize that characteristics of the college experience are particularly important indicators of transitioning into paid activism. Therefore, I followed a set of college activists at 15 different colleges and universities spread across the country, for a total of three waves of data collection after college graduation. These participants worked on a broad set of issues in college, are best described as participants in the protest wave of social justice activism since 2008 (Milkman 2017). I use this data to estimate the effects of characteristics at college graduation on whether recent college graduates continue with a volunteer activist pathway, or transition into paid activism.

Sampling

The sample consists of college activists at 15 different colleges and universities in the United States, with participants involved in the “new political generation” of social justice activism (Milkman 2017: 2). I selected each university for geographic and institutional diversity, but for similarity within each geographic and institutional group. For example, I first selected public universities with comparable academic ratings and campus cultures, as measured by both the Princeton Review and US News and World Report (U.S. News and World Report. 2011; Franek, Meltzer, Maier, and Olson 2010). Because activism is much more common on elite college campuses (Van Dyke 1998), I ensured that all of my potential campuses were considered

academically elite within their institutional type. I then narrowed down the list to of comparable public universities to four by identifying schools that had more than 5 “social justice organizations” (SJOs) and that they had regularly updated lists of student organizations. I then repeated this process for elite private research universities and small liberal arts colleges⁶.

I defined a social justice organization (SJO) as any college group that seeks to change the social, structural, and/or institutional relationships that perpetuate inequality and injustice. It was necessary to only include campuses with a substantial number of SJOs because on any college campus, there are relatively few activists when compared to non-activists. Furthermore, it was necessary to recruit from SJOs because during pilot testing, only a few potential participants actually identified with the label “activist.” This is consistent with previous research showing that activists often do not label themselves this way (Bobel 2007; Corrigan-Brown 2012), and required that I recruit individuals based on their identity, which was a “social justice participant.” Since I was unable to recruit people who self-identified as “activists,” I opted to recruit

⁶ My protocol involved several stages. First, I set a range of academic rankings in US News and World Report for each of my three classes of schools, cross-referencing it with the Princeton Review’s admissions selectivity and academic ratings. Second, I checked all of their student organizations webpages to ensure that new groups were added regularly and that had between 5 and 50 student organizations that qualified as SJOs. Third, I then classified each school into four geographic regions; the northeast, southeast, upper midwest, and pacific coast. I did this to ensure geographic similarity between schools, and then excluded schools that did not fit in those regions. Fourth, I read about the campus cultures at both schools, and identified a subset of schools that had comparable campus cultures within institutional type.

My intention was to have sixteen schools; four flagship public universities, four private research universities, and eight small liberal arts colleges. These would be spread evenly across the four regions of the country. I expected that it would be very difficult to narrow down schools by comparable campus cultures at the final stage, but I discovered that very few schools keep updated lists of student organizations, have five or more SJOs, and fit within my four geographically contiguous regions. The result was that I did not need to read too many different profiles of campus culture, and I had to exclude relatively few colleges during the final stage. In fact there was only one small liberal arts college left in the northeastern region by the final stage, leaving me with only 15 institutions.

Overall, small liberal arts colleges tended to have quirky and eccentric students who created their own recreational activities, while the elite private and public universities had a more heterogeneous student body but also had ample social opportunities such as campus movies. None of the campuses appeared to have particularly high or low degrees of drinking, Greek life, or sports enthusiasm.

participants who were involved with social justice organizations. This excludes several groups including political party, service, and conservative-learning activist organizations.

That said, the SJOs were very diverse in a number of different ways. Some groups were affiliates of larger, national organizations, while others were founded and developed by students. The topics ranged from traditional left-leaning groups (such as labor rights and feminist groups) to groups that were officially apolitical (such as those that addressed human trafficking) to groups that were radical and transgressive (such as anti-capitalist collectives). Because I developed this list of SJOs during the summer, all of the organizations had been registered in the previous academic year or earlier. While it is possible that I missed participants who were only involved in non-registered organizations, I did discuss non-registered SJO participation during interviews. Although my information about non-registered SJOs is limited, the interviews indicate they primarily draw their members from registered SJO groups. While the sampling frame does not cover every activist organization on these 15 college campuses, the umbrella term of “social justice organization” covers a wide range of activist groups. At the minimum, it covers a much broader spectrum of groups than research that studies a single organization or movement, and represents Milkman’s (2017: 2) “new political generation” of post-2008 activists.

After identifying every SJO at each college campus using official lists of registered student groups, I contacted each one for a list of graduating seniors who had either led a meeting or helped plan an event and were also graduating in Spring 2012. I contacted 222 SJOs in total, and 161 groups responded with a full list of participants. Some of the organizations had ceased to exist by the time the next school year began, although the contacts were normally happy to provide me with information about the students who were previously involved. Of 341 potential participants, 192 agreed to participate in the first wave of the study, which measured several

characteristics during their last year of college. I then followed up with three additional questionnaires during Spring 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2016. Most participants stayed involved with the study; 46% of the sample stayed involved at all four waves, 67% of the sample participated in at least three waves, and 80% of the sample participated in at least two waves of data collection. I also conducted 85 interviews with a subsample of 47 participants, which are only used in this study to describe participants' work experience and to provide an example of different post-graduation pathways.

The actual sample of participants also has some limitations. Because the opportunities for paid opportunities in conservative movements may differ from left-wing movements (e.g., Binder and Wood 2013; Fisher 2006), it is possible that this sample does not describe transitions into paid work for conservative activists. That said, there is no evidence that interest or resources to participate in activism differ across political groups. Similarly, Reyes (2015) notes that activist “styles” are particularly community-focused at regional commuter universities when compared to a flagship university. However, activist styles are more community-focused at public universities than private schools (Binder and Wood 2013), so it may be possible to make tentative out-of-sample predictions about the individuals who attend regional commuter universities as well. Future research will need to identify whether the present findings generalize to right-wing activists and to activists at comprehensive four-year colleges.

Variables of Interest

This study uses several time-invariant predictors to estimate which types of activists are likely to transition into paid activism and commit to activism. I operationalize transition into paid activism whether someone worked for pay at a social justice organization during Waves 2-4. Participants at each wave listed each social justice organization (SJO) that paid them a wage, salary, or stipend; social justice organizations were any organization that was responsible for

challenging structural, institutional, or organizational relationships that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Continued volunteer activism is operationalized as someone's involvement with an SJO who was unpaid. I then created a multinomial categorical variable that represented four discrete activist pathways: None, volunteer, paid, and both volunteer and paid and operationalized as a multinomial categorical variable. Most individuals who volunteered for an SJO tended to volunteer only a few hours every month, with a highly involved outliers (mean: 4.34; standard deviation: 13.81; 95th percentile: 24 hours per week).

One question that I am unable to answer with the quantitative data is what participants did for work if they did not work at an activist organization. After all, only about 16% of the sample worked for an SJO at Wave 3, and it is fair to question whether the other 84% were working at non-activist jobs that were extensions of their own previous activism. To answer this question, I coded all of the interviews at Wave 3 to identify what jobs they worked at; the full results are listed in Figure 3.1. Of the 40 participants, 10 of them worked for pay at an SJO, with the remainder split between a number of different fields. A large number of the remaining participants were in graduate or professional school, with the individuals in graduate school almost exclusively working for pay on a research project. A second set of individuals were working at either service jobs or in clerical positions; most were not happy about this, and had not envisioned this outcome when completing their 4-year degree. A small number of individuals worked in the educational system, and another small set worked in media or public relations. With few exceptions, it does not appear that the participants took jobs that compromised their previous beliefs in any way, but they also did not enter jobs that connected directly to their previous activist interests.

The second question that I am unable to answer using quantitative data is what tasks participants did at activist jobs, and whether it matches the types of activities performed by volunteer activists (as described in Jasper 1997; Kleidman 1994; Lichterman 1996; Nepstad 2004). Therefore, I code the responses of all 10 participants involved in paid activism at Wave 3 to identify the types of social movement tasks participants perform; the results are displayed in Figure 3.2. Most of the participants are involved in broader strategy discussions, such as selecting targets, developing coalitions, and selecting tactics. The other tasks varied more across participants, but several participants were involved with some combination of developing a media strategy, planning protests, and recruiting/developing volunteers. Two participants were involved with fundraising, and another two worked directly with elected representatives and other policy makers. Overall, paid activists take on many of the planning, strategy, recruitment, and training responsibilities that volunteers perform in less professionalized organizations (Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Binder and Wood 2013; Jasper 1997; Kleidman 1994; Lichterman 1996; Oliver 1983) —and because paid activists can devote their entire workweek to activism, they often take on several these responsibilities at one time.

I operationalize family social class with dummy variables for parental education (as in Johnson and Mortimer 2011). Participants who have at least one parent with a four-year college degree, but no parent with a graduate degree, are represented with the dummy variable “Four Year Degree” while those with at least one parent with a graduate degree are represented by the variable “Graduate Degree.” I use first-generation college students as the omitted category. While a large number of participants have parents with a graduate degree in this sample, this is not surprising since parental educational background is highly correlated with child’s educational attainment, and educational attainment is related to activist participation (Black, Devereux, and

Salvanes 2005; Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011). I measure college major by asking each participant to write down their majors in two separate open-ended text boxes. All students were expected to fill out the first text box, and to complete the second box if they double-majored in a second subject. I then hand-coded a dummy variable to denote whether students majored in a social and behavioral science (SBS) discipline.

The other variables in this study are measured in a straightforward manner. The type of college institution is measured by a set of dummy variables; one variable denotes attendance at an elite private university and another at a small liberal arts school, with attendance at a public flagship university the omitted variable. I measure student debt by expected student debt at graduation; I do not measure student debt after graduation because it is endogenous to post-graduate educational and work careers. Health limitations are measured by a Likert scale from 0-2, asking whether a person is not limited, somewhat limited, or very limited in performing activities of daily living. I also include a variable indicating whether the person is currently pursuing post-graduate education, and whether the participant is married. Finally, it is possible that activist participation could vary depending on how far an individual is from college graduation, and so I include dummy variables indicating whether the measurement was taken at Wave 3 or Wave 4, using Wave 2 as the omitted category. All of the predictor variables in this study are time-invariant except for post-graduate college attendance, marital status, ADL limitations, and survey wave.

Although the overall sample suffered some attrition, the demographics of the sample stay relatively stable from one wave to the next. I list the time-varying predictor and outcomes in Table 3.1, and the time-invariant predictors in Table 3.2. With the exception of a slight decline in

the number of participants from flagship state universities at Wave 4, the overall demographics do not differ substantively across survey waves.

Analysis

I test the hypotheses in this study using a multi-level multinomial logit model (Skrondal and Rabe-Hesketh 2003). Multi-level models—sometimes called random effects or hierarchical linear models—are particularly useful for repeated measurements on the same person, so that each model consists of both a regular intercept and a person-specific intercept. This removes intra-class correlation that biases standard errors, allowing the analyst to gain the benefits of additional information about the same individual at different times points (see also: Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). Meanwhile, multinomial logit models are ideal for investigating discrete choice options, such as whether an individual follows a volunteer activist pathway, a paid activist pathway, both, or neither (Powers and Xie 2000).

The major advantage of a multilevel model in this case—as opposed to only measuring behavior at one time point—is that both paid and activist behaviors are likely unstable during young adulthood. An individual may be involved in one campaign, but once the campaign ends they will no longer be involved as a volunteer (Corrigall-Brown 2012). Assessing whether someone is volunteering with an SJO at one time point may give us a misleading picture of their behavior after college because they could stop as soon as the campaign is over. Similarly, research on work activities in young adulthood suggests that many young adults try out many jobs before settling into a stable career (Settersten Jr. and Ray 2010). Overall, assessing behavior over multiple time points gives us multiple opportunities to assess whether the same person is involved in work or volunteer activism, which may not be immediately apparent at a single point in time. For example, among the participants who filled out surveys for all waves of data collection, 24.72% of the sample volunteered at one time point after college, while only 9%

volunteered at all three waves. Similarly, 19.1% of the sample was employed at an SJO at one time point, compared to 5.62% who worked at an SJO at all three time points.

I present three models, each of which estimates the effects of independent variables on paid and volunteer activism. The first model estimates the effect of fixed characteristics on activist participation, including: Being female (β_{1j}), race ($\beta_{2j}, \beta_{3j}, \beta_{4j}$), whether the participant had a parent with a four-year degree (β_{5j}), whether the participant had a parent with a graduate degree (β_{6j}), self-identification as non-heterosexual (β_{7j}), and whether the measurement was taken at Wave 3 or Wave 4 (β_{8j}, β_{9j}). In the second model, I add time-varying estimates of health limitations on activities of daily living (β_{10j}) and marital status (β_{11j}). I also estimate the effect of college characteristics such as majoring in a social or behavioral science (β_{12j}); expected student debt at graduation (β_{13j}); and whether they attended an elite private university (β_{14j}) or liberal arts college (β_{15j}). In the third model, I add whether the participant is currently taking post-graduate coursework (β_{16j}). The level-one equation for the third model that estimates the effects of all of the listed covariates on activist pathway is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Logit}\{p(\text{pathway})\} = & \beta_0 + \beta_{1j}(X_{\text{female}}) + \beta_{2j}(X_{\text{black}}) + \beta_{3j}(X_{\text{asian}}) + \beta_{4j}(X_{\text{other}}) + \\ & \beta_{5j}(X_{\text{4_year_degree}}) + \beta_{6j}(X_{\text{grad_degree}}) + \beta_{7j}(X_{\text{nonhetero}}) + \beta_{8j}(X_{\text{Wave3}}) + \beta_{9j}(X_{\text{Wave4}}) + \\ & \beta_{10j}(X_{\text{adl_limits}}) + \beta_{11j}(X_{\text{married}}) + \beta_{12j}(X_{\text{major:sbs}}) + \beta_{13j}(X_{\text{debt}}) + \beta_{14j}(X_{\text{priv_univ}}) + \\ & \beta_{15j}(X_{\text{slac}}) + \beta_{16j}(X_{\text{student}}) + e_{ij} \end{aligned}$$

With the level-two equation:

$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

I use Mplus 7.4 for all analysis, and also use clustered-robust standard errors by school in all models in order to account for intra-class correlation within each institution⁷. I use the Maximum Likelihood-Robust estimator, which accounts for missing data via full-information maximum likelihood.

Results

In this section, I first estimate the effect of individual-level characteristics such as sex, race/ethnicity, and parental educational attainment on each dependent variable. In the second model, I include characteristics of the participants' undergraduate institution such as college major, expected student debt at graduation, and institutional type (public flagship, elite private university, or liberal arts college). In the third model I include whether the participant is currently in graduate school. I present Models 1-3 in a single table, but consider each activist pathway separately to clearly state the results of each hypothesis.

Table 3.3 presents the demographic and educational predictors of continuing volunteer activism; based on Hypotheses 2 and 5, we would expect that individuals who graduate from a public flagship university would be more comfortable and interested in off-campus activist volunteering than those who attended a private research university or SLAC. Additionally, we would expect that they would have more connections to off-campus activist opportunities. Finally, we would expect that participants who attend graduate school would have more access to activist opportunities. Models 2 and 3 show that while public school graduates are more likely to continue volunteering than alumni of private research institutions ($p < 0.01$), there is no

⁷ In most cases, the standard strategy would be to estimate a three-level model instead of clustering the standard errors. However, since there are 15 different institutions with only 192 participants, a three-level model is empirically under-identified and returns the same results as a two-level model. In other words, it does not take intra-class correlation for school into account at all, and I use clustered-robust errors instead.

significant difference between public universities and SLACs. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is partially supported: Graduating from a flagship public university increases the likelihood of post-college volunteer activism, but only compared to private research institutions. Meanwhile, Hypotheses 5 is supported in Model 3: Current graduate student status has a statistically significant and positive effect on continued volunteer activism ($p < 0.001$).

Table 3.4 shows the predictors of transitioning to paid activism in the immediate post-college years; based on Hypothesis 1, 3, 4, we would expect that individuals from higher class backgrounds, who majored in the social and behavioral sciences, and who do not enter graduate school will have greater interest in and resources to obtain paid activism. All three of these hypotheses are supported. Parental education variables have a statistically significant effect on paid activism ($p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 1; majoring in a social or behavioral science increases the likelihood of employment transitioning to paid activism ($p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis 2; and graduate students are less likely to transition to paid activism ($p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 4.

The predictors of transitioning to paid activism while continuing volunteer activism are listed in Table 3.5. Since these individuals follow a path that combines work and volunteer activism, we would expect several hypotheses to apply. We would expect that individuals from higher class backgrounds and who major in SBS disciplines would have more interest in and resources to obtain paid activist work; meanwhile, individuals who attend public universities should have more interest and resources in performing volunteer activism. However, none of these hypotheses are supported, which suggests that combining paid and volunteer activism may require a specific combination of interests and resources. However, attending graduate school has a negative effect on combining activist and paid roles ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that the

diminished ability to take social movement jobs in graduate school also makes it difficult to combine paid and volunteer activism.

Table 3.6 summarizes whether each hypothesis is supported. Individuals who come from higher-SES families and who major in a social and behavioral science are more likely to transition to paid activism. On the other hand, individuals who attend graduate school are less likely to transition to paid activism, but more likely to continue involvement in volunteer activism. However, there is a mixed finding for the effects of attending a public school on continued volunteer activism; public university graduates are more likely to continue than those who attended private research schools, but no more likely than those who attended small liberal arts colleges. One key point is that while there are several factors that predict continuing volunteer activism or transitioning to paid activism instead of dropping out of social movements, *none* of the factors that predict continued activist volunteering are the same as those that predict transitioning to paid activism. In other words, while interests and resources are required for sustaining activist participation, different types of interests and resources lead to participating in social movements in different ways.

Discussion

Why do some college activists continue volunteering, others transition into paid activism, while many others simply stop altogether? I follow prior studies that argue an individual must have an *interest* and the *resources* to participate in a social movement, and therefore interests and resources predict continued activist participation (e.g, Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987). However, I also argue that *different* types of interests and resources lead to *different* types of participation. For example, activists from higher class backgrounds are more interested in enacting their values at work, and are more likely to be able to take low-paid jobs. Additionally, while individuals who major in the social and behavioral sciences have more

interest in and ability to get paid activist jobs, we would expect that individuals at public schools have more interest in and awareness of post-college volunteer activism. Finally, individuals who attend graduate school have little ability to find a paid activist job, while those who do attend graduate school have access to far more activist opportunities than those who do not.

To test these hypotheses, I follow a diverse sample of activists in the post-2008 protest wave as they graduate from college (Milkman 2017). I find support for most, but not all of the hypotheses. The characteristics of activists who continue volunteering are comparable to those who drop out entirely, although graduate students are more likely and private research university alumni are less likely to continue volunteering. Meanwhile, there are substantial differences between individuals who transition to paid activism and those who drop out—these participants come from more highly-educated families, tend to major in the social and behavioral sciences, and are less likely to concurrently attend graduate school. Overall, *none* of the variables that predict volunteer activism also predict paid activism, and vice versa. While interests and resources cluster by family background and educational experiences—and predict activist participation—different types of interests and resources predict activist participation.

One particular finding deserves further scrutiny—public university graduates are more likely to continue volunteer activism than those who attended private research universities, but not compared to graduates of small liberal arts colleges. This is surprising; because activists at public schools conduct more community-focused campaigns than those at liberal arts schools (Reyes 2015), activists at liberal arts colleges should not have as much interest or ability to get involved in post-college volunteer activism. However, liberal arts colleges often claim that their goal is to teach students how to “transform the world,” a goal which is not shared at other institutional types (Morphew and Hartley 2006: 466). If liberal arts colleges are successful, then

the activists at these schools may be just as interested as continuing to volunteer with social movements, even though they have less practical experience in doing so. However, further research is needed to verify that liberal arts colleges are actually successful at stoking interest in post-college social movement participation.

There are two different limitations to this study. First, this study investigates transitions into post-undergraduate volunteer and paid activism. Because of this, all participants have already been involved with activist work while a college student, and therefore the findings in this study should not be used to examine how people become activists for the first time. Most of the population is not particularly interested in activism (Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011), and therefore it is difficult to estimate either work or paid activist involvement in a random sample. Following individuals with a demonstrated interest in activism provides better information about the people who do engage in activism, but have higher mobilization potential than the general population (Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987). A nationally representative, longitudinal dataset with sufficient data on mobilization potential and with sufficient numbers of both paid and activist participants would be useful to help identify the transition into activism, but no such dataset currently exists with recent birth cohorts. A replication of the Youth-Parent Socialization Study would be ideal for this purpose (Jennings, Markus, Niemi, and Stoker 2005).

Second, although the present theory suggests that interest and resources affect the type of activist participation, I am unable to distinguish between interests and resources in this particular study. To be fair, one of the biggest methodological problems in sociological research is that people tend to want what they already attain (Bourdieu and Nice 1984). This means that not having direct measurements of interests and resources is not unique to this study, and that interests and resources tend to covary in most scenarios anyway. However, future scholarship

could better untangle the effects of interests and resources by introducing additional variables into the analysis such as: Individual-level work values as a direct measurement of interest in ideologically-driven work, family wealth to measure whether family members can help support children in an emergency, and intergenerational economic support to measure whether there is an ongoing set of remittances to subsidize low-pay jobs.

There are three implications of this study for future scholarship on social movements scholars, the sociology of work and occupations, and nonprofit organizations. While social movements scholars have long noted that interest and resources play a role in activist participation but have paid little attention to *different* types of activist participation. The two major exceptions are Jasper (1997) and Lichterman (1996), who find that individuals from different cultural backgrounds become involved with different types of issues and also advocate for different types of tactics and messaging.

Although the theory and findings presented here do not analyze culture in as robust a way as Jasper (1997) and Lichterman (1996), the present findings expand their findings in two ways. First, while cultural factors certainly play a role in shaping interests, resources also play a role in the type of activist participation. For example, since more education leads to a greater likelihood of protest (Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011), it does not seem likely that the individuals who are attending graduate school have less interest in activism. Rather, attending graduate school places participants in a situation where they have few resources to pursue paid activism and many resources for volunteer activism. While there is substantial evidence that issue, tactic, and strategy selection vary across cultural background, we would expect all of these to change dramatically based on the resources available to them. Thus, future social movements scholarship should merge the strengths of a robust cultural analysis with studies of structural

availability, which posit that availability of opportunities and the ability to mobilize personal resources are a crucial determinant of activist participation (Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; McAdam 1988; Schussman and Soule 2005).

Second, while there has been some research on differences in issue selection and tactics, there has been less study of how interests and resources affect roles within social movements. This study suggests that interests and resources embedded in family background and educational experiences not only affect activist participation, but that different interests and resources lead to a different role within social movements. That said, many activist volunteers cannot contribute as much time to social movements as paid activists, which means that the range of tasks they perform may be narrower. While paid activists may canvass, recruit and develop volunteers, and plan strategy or tactics, volunteers may specialize in only one or two of these areas. Future research should look at how biographical factors influence not just activist participation, but also the roles within social movements that volunteers select into.

Third, this study investigated whether individuals found work at a job that provides a type of “ideological currency” or “moral wages” (Kolb 2014: 22; Thompson and Bunderson 2003: 574). However, this study does little to shed light on how ideological commitment generally affects labor market decisions. Moral wages are a type of intrinsic reward that could lead individuals to select into particular career paths, but we know little about the range of jobs that provide moral wages or what sorts of organizations develop them. Knowing more about which jobs provide moral wages, and which types of individuals respond to each one, would help us better understand why—and how frequently—some people make career decisions based on political values. Furthermore, it may help us understand why some individuals choose to work for nonprofit or public organizations instead of private employers. Ultimately, this research would help explain how moral worldviews influence labor market behavior, and how similar the social movement and nonprofit sectors are to other industries.

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Table 3.1. Sample Means and Standard Deviations for Time-Varying Outcomes and Predictors Across Waves

Variable	Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Volunteered with SJO Only	0.23	0.42	0.22	0.42	0.24	0.43
Employed at SJO Only	0.08	0.27	0.09	0.29	0.08	0.28
Volunteered and Worked at SJO	0.06	0.23	0.07	0.25	0.05	0.22
Health Limitations in ADLs	0.11	0.36	0.11	0.36	0.11	0.34
Married	0.01	0.09	0.04	0.19	0.04	0.18
In Graduate School	0.19	0.40	0.33	0.47	0.32	0.47

Table 3.2. Sample Means and Standard Deviations for Time-Invariant Predictors Across Waves

Variable	Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Female	0.64	0.48	0.68	0.47	0.68	0.47
Black	0.09	0.28	0.11	0.31	0.10	0.30
Asian	0.12	0.33	0.12	0.33	0.12	0.33
Other (Race)	0.16	0.37	0.12	0.33	0.12	0.33
Non-Heterosexual	0.35	0.48	0.33	0.47	0.31	0.46
Major: Social and Behavioral Science	0.55	0.5	0.61	0.49	0.58	0.5
Expected Debt at Graduation (\div by 10K)	0.93	1.47	0.82	1.4	0.7	1.22
Flagship Public University	0.27	0.45	0.25	0.43	0.21	0.41
Elite Private University	0.28	0.45	0.3	0.46	0.31	0.46
Liberal Arts College	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	0.48	0.5
Parental Education: < than 4 Year Degree	0.14	0.35	0.13	0.34	0.15	0.36
Parental Education: 4 Year Degree	0.25	0.44	0.26	0.44	0.25	0.44
Parental Education: Graduate Degree	0.61	0.49	0.61	0.49	0.59	0.49

Table 3.3. Predictors of Continuing Volunteer Activism

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Female	-.12 (.215)	-.21 (.223)	-.251 (.26)
Non-Heterosexual	.687** (.248)	.732** (.225)	.733** (.269)
Race: Asian	-.632 (.751)	-.645 (.699)	-.682 (.684)
Race: Black	.387 (.338)	.172 (.424)	.233 (.432)
Race: Other	-.87 (.798)	-.996 (.773)	-.743 (.794)
Parent Highest Education: 4 Year College	-.231 (.433)	-.306 (.43)	-.284 (.485)
Parent Highest Education: Graduate School	-.765 (.439)	-.635 (.496)	-.557 (.514)
Social and Behavioral Sciences Major		.188 (.368)	.19 (.351)
Expected Student Debt at Graduation (Divided by 10K)		.061 (.187)	.117 (.187)
Institution: Private University		-.87** (.288)	-.968** (.346)
Institution: Small Liberal Arts College		-.362 (.346)	-.336 (.378)
Limitations on ADLs		-.494 (.31)	-.797* (.327)
Married		1.369 (.824)	1.242 (.681)
Wave 3	.082 (.275)	.032 (.278)	-.132 (.283)
Wave 4	.003 (.405)	.035 (.406)	-.072 (.39)
Currently a Student			1.241*** (.332)
Intercept	-1.111* (.5)	-.811 (.668)	-1.225 (.752)

Clustered-Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 3.4. Predictors of Transitioning to Paid Activism

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Female	-.697 (.411)	-.83* (.354)	-.814* (.326)
Non-Heterosexual	.73 (.527)	.644 (.467)	.597 (.426)
Race: Asian	-.998 (.92)	-1.058 (.868)	-1.158 (.834)
Race: Black	-.693 (.763)	-.878 (1.022)	-.807 (.986)
Race: Other	-.143 (.639)	-.389 (.637)	-.611 (.675)
Parent Highest Education: 4 Year College	1.98* (.943)	2.431*** (.533)	2.397*** (.565)
Parent Highest Education: Graduate School	1.757 (.968)	2.141** (.62)	1.975** (.665)
Social and Behavioral Sciences Major		1.556* (.654)	1.508* (.644)
Expected Student Debt at Graduation (Divided by 10K)		.142 (.188)	.104 (.19)
Institution: Private University		.58 (.632)	.597 (.642)
Institution: Small Liberal Arts College		-.104 (.567)	-.173 (.604)
Limitations on ADLs		-1.002 (1.208)	-.608 (1.1)
Married		1.785** (.638)	2.13** (.746)
Wave 3	.194 (.569)	.137 (.597)	.302 (.58)
Wave 4	-.104 (.512)	-.164 (.552)	-.031 (.499)
Currently a Student			-1.586** (.582)
Intercept	-4.696** (1.364)	-6.11*** (1.116)	-5.555*** (.997)

Clustered-Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 3.5. Predictors of Continuing Volunteer Activism and Transitioning to Paid Activism

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Female	.464 (.518)	.413 (.456)	.376 (.455)
Non-Heterosexual	.343 (.79)	.425 (.791)	.391 (.834)
Race: Asian	1.082 (.924)	1.073 (.915)	1.046 (.972)
Race: Black	-18.564*** (.545)	-13.245*** (.729)	-15.464*** (.831)
Race: Other	.01 (.596)	-.197 (.54)	-.532 (.609)
Parent Highest Education: 4 Year College	1.148 (1.699)	.951 (1.713)	1.081 (1.835)
Parent Highest Education: Graduate School	1.636 (1.464)	1.244 (1.441)	1.216 (1.578)
Social and Behavioral Sciences Major		1.219 (.691)	1.228 (.706)
Expected Student Debt at Graduation (Divided by 10K)		-.219 (.284)	-.316 (.306)
Institution: Private University		-.314 (.671)	-.335 (.652)
Institution: Small Liberal Arts College		.177 (.651)	.132 (.646)
Limitations on ADLs		-13.458*** (.745)	-15.231*** (.68)
Married		1.124 (1.044)	1.842 (1.413)
Wave 3	.11 (.497)	.022 (.545)	.234 (.562)
Wave 4	.524 (.404)	.261 (.468)	.595 (.486)
Currently a Student			-2.267*** (.591)
Intercept	-5.935** (2.011)	-5.822** (1.906)	-5.645** (1.993)

Clustered-Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 3.6. Summary of Hypothesized Relationships and Findings

Predictor	<u>Continuing Volunteer Activism</u>		<u>Transition to Paid Activism</u>	
	Hypothesis	Observed Effect	Hypothesis	Observed Effect
Greater Parental Education	No Prediction	None	H1: Positive	Positive
From Private Research University or SLAC	H2: Negative	Negative for Private Research University; None for SLAC	No Prediction	None
Majoring in Social or Behavioral Science	No Prediction	None	H3: Positive	Positive
Attending Post-Graduate Institution	H5: Positive	Positive	H4: Negative	Negative

Figure 3.1: Non-Activist Jobs in Qualitative Sample

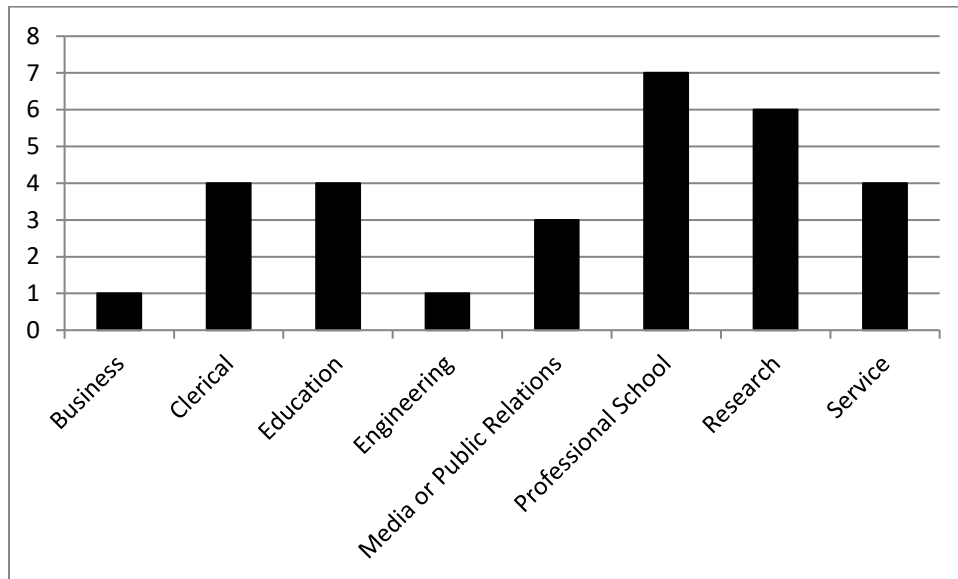
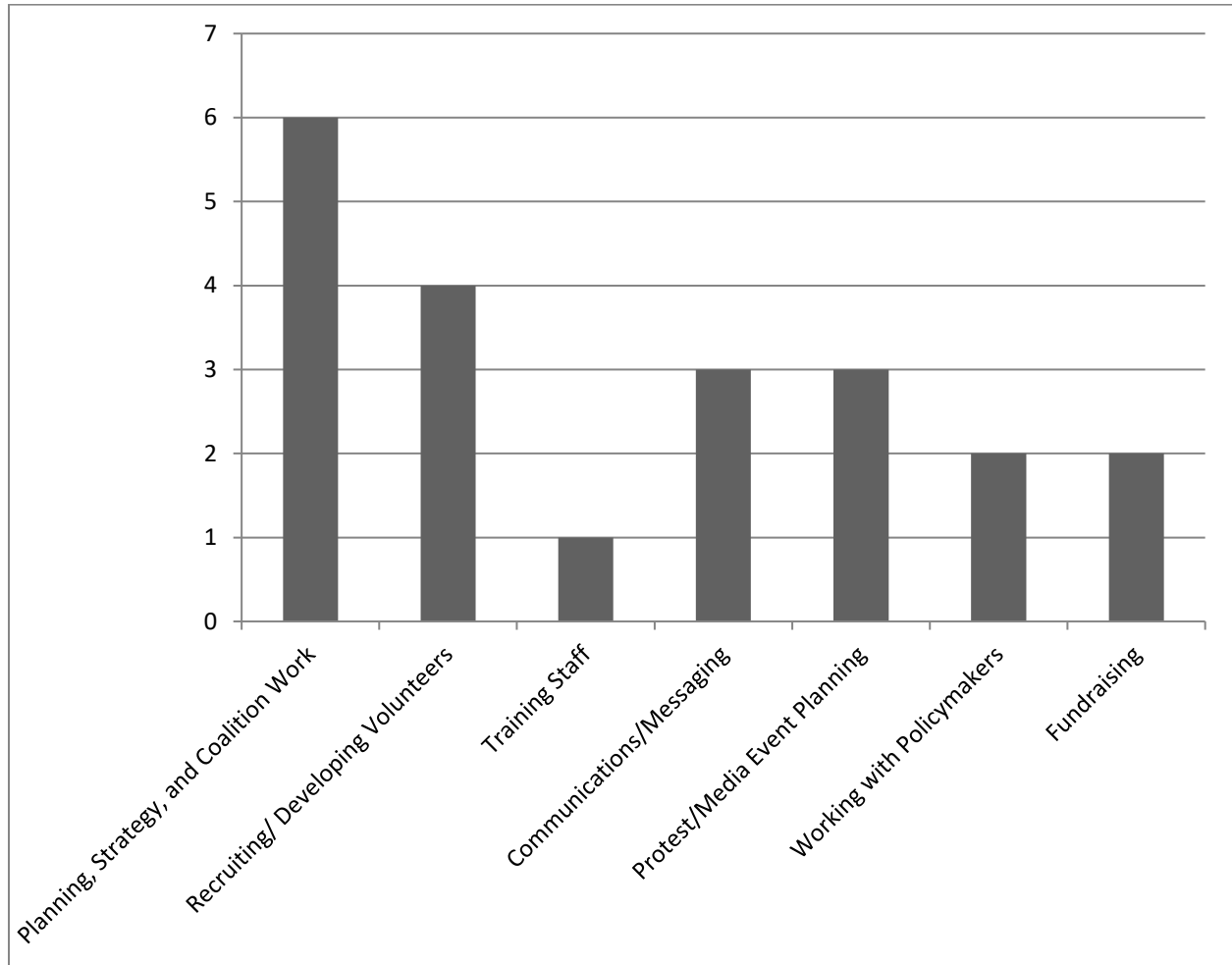


Figure 3.2. Tasks at Activist Jobs



CHAPTER 4: I'M PROUD OF YOU, PLEASE STOP: INDIVIDUALIZATION, ACTIVISM, AND A THEORY OF SOCIAL CONCERN

The present study is about how actors perceive social influence, and whether the construct of a “social norm” might be conflated with alternative forms of social influence. Social norms involve three parts: A value statement about what a person *should* or *should not* do; a social *requirement* that a person conforms to the ideal; and some sort of *sanction* to punish individuals who do not adhere to the required behavior (Gibbs 1965; Jasso and Opp 1997; Liefbroer and Billari 2010; Settersten 1998). A loose interpretation of this basic definition pervades contemporary sociological research. The “normative/deviant” paradigm asserts that people learn how to behave from the expectations of others; “good” behavior and roles are encouraged and rewarded with moral approval, while “bad” behavior and roles are discouraged and punished by some type of disapproval (Adams and Bettis 2003; Barnard 2016; Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, and Moen 2010; Lamont 2014; Massoglia and Uggens 2010; Mollborn 2009). Thus, people use social norms as a way to align others’ behavior with their values.

The present study was initially planned as an extension of the normative/deviant framework, looking at how activists perceive social norms in the transition to adulthood. I conducted 84 interviews with 47 different current and former college activists, spread over three different time periods. However, I did not find much evidence for social norms at all; instead, family members praise activism, yet attempt to divert activists away from social movements. I therefore draw from research on individualization and class differences in parenting to outline an alternative form of social influence, and illustrate it using the present data (Beck and Beck-

Gernsheim 2002; Calarco 2014; Frank, Camp, and Boutcher 2010; Frank and McEneaney 1999; Frank and Meyer 2002; Kohn 1977; Kohn 1963; Lareau 2002; Weininger and Lareau 2009).

Ultimately, “social norms” are value statements, with the sanction a means of producing conformity. When a person conveys a “social norm,” they state a *value standard*, which the target is *required* to follow or the norm-holder will *impose social sanctions*. In contrast, “social concern” is fundamentally an instrumental statement about risky behavior, with little implied moral judgment. When a person conveys social concern, the starting point is a *warning of risk* with no direct social sanctioning; the warning is delivered to emphasize the participants’ *autonomy*, rather than an ultimatum; and the warning itself is *divorced from judgments of “good” or “bad” behavior*, to the point that the person expressing social concern may show approval of the behavior while simultaneously warning against it. As a result, future scholarship needs to move beyond “positive” and “negative” evaluations in social networks and communities to focus on the multidimensional messages participants receive. Additionally, sociologists should investigate the extent to which this new, more flexible form of “social concern” coexists with or replaces existing social norms across heterogeneous populations, and whether social concern impacts behavior differently than social norms.

The Normative/Deviant Paradigm

While the concept of “social norms” may appear dated, the basic conception of norms pervades social research and serves as a foundational paradigm for sociology. The “normative/deviant” paradigm asserts that “good” behavior and roles are encouraged and rewarded with moral approval, while “bad” behavior and roles are discouraged and punished by some type of disapproval. Over time, individuals learn that bad behaviors elicit unpleasant reactions, and adjust their behavior accordingly (Gibbs 1965; Jasso and Opp 1997; Liefbroer and Billari 2010; Massoglia and Uggen 2010). In this section, I review how sociological researchers

operationalize the three main components of norms—value statements, social requirements, and sanctions—and examine the existing reasons to doubt the normative/deviant paradigm.

Value Statements

The starting point for social norms is a value statement about whether someone *should* or *should not* engage in a certain behavior. These value statements are measured in a variety of ways. For example, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2011: 662) analyze GSS data which asks participants which actions make a “good citizen,” linking behavioral tasks to an ideal role performance. Cheng and Starks (2002: 311) operationalize desired educational attainments with a survey question stating “How far in school do you think your father and mother want you to go?” Settersten (1998: 1380) directly asks questions with the descriptor “should,” such as “By what age should a man leave his parents' home?” Liefbroer and Billari (2010: 294) measure age norms by asking about “the upper age limit for leaving home, the lower age limit for starting to live with a partner and both the lower and upper age limit for having a child.” Using interview data, Adams and Bettis (2003) identify norms when cheerleading coaches instruct their charges to move aggressively, and also when they insist that the cheerleaders behave in a feminine and sexy way. Meanwhile, Barnard (2016: 1030) locates value statements in the Freegan claim that it is moral to live “naturally.”

However, many studies report that norms are somewhat ambiguous, and thus do not provide a value statement to guide appropriate behavior. For example, Stone (2007) finds that intensive parenting and ideal worker norms present an intractable conflict for female employees, with little guidance to help explain the correct course of behavior. Meanwhile, Jasso and Opp (1997) conducted a factorial survey experiment where the participant was asked to rate whether the vignette protagonist should protest on a scale of -5 (strongly against protest participation) to +5 (strongly in favor of protest participation). They found a large number of different responses

on the valuation of protest, expectation to participate, and under what conditions someone should or should not participate. Jasso and Opp (1997: 962) conclude that “it is not clear whether we found true norms that operate in distinct social systems...or whether we found a normless single social system.”

It is quite likely that this ambiguity mirrors the morality of modern life. Although violent actions still elicit strong moral objections, deviation from common behaviors are often recognized as an individual’s right (Frank, Camp, and Boutcher 2010). Many individuals have to make difficult choices between pursuing goals related to marriage, having children, civic participation, and their work careers; reconciling these contradictory goals is difficult (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). There is some recognition that there are many “correct” choices in life, and that not everyone needs to adhere to a single standard in modern, industrialized nations (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2008; Inglehart, Ponarin, and Inglehart Forthcoming). Yet, people may still provide social influence because they care about the welfare of others and wish to help them. For example, Harding (2009) does find that older kids instruct younger children in their neighborhood on the proper way to behave in public places—not to meet a moral standard, but to avoid attracting the attention of police.

Required Behavior

The second key aspect of social norms is that individuals are required to adhere to a particular course of action. The most obvious example of a requirement is when a law forbids engaging in delinquent or criminal behavior. However, social requirements can be measured in a number of different ways; for example Jasso and Opp (1997: 950) measure the degree to which a participant believes someone has the “obligation to participate...or has an obligation *not* to participate in [a] protest.” Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, and Moen (2010: 292) identify the expectation for high work commitment through comments such as “Can’t your [spouse] stay

home with your [sick] daughter?” Lamont (2014: 201) finds that women say that it isn’t their “role” to propose to their partners, which underpins the cultural requirement that men will propose to their girlfriends. Settersten (1998: 1380) measures social requirements with questions such as “After what age should a man *not* be allowed to return to his parents' home to live?” Piskorski and Gorbatâi (2017) show that Wikipedia editors had strong rules about the proper use of the “undo” feature; it was to be used only to restore vandalized pages, not to remove substantive updates. Barnard (2016: 1035) finds that Freegans felt they were “required” to live in a sustainable way, which included practices such as dumpster diving.

That said, a focus on requirements conflicts with the emphasis placed on choice in educational and middle-class family settings. Robinson (2011) finds increased choice in curricular offerings over a century, while Rutherford (2004) finds that commencement speeches now increasingly favor an individualized approach to choice instead of appeals to traditional authority. Even children, whose rights and behavior are legally restrained, are encouraged to actively interrogate knowledge instead of passively accepting “right” and “wrong” answers (Bromley, Meyer, and Ramirez 2011). Meanwhile, middle-class families prepare their children for navigating institutions by teaching them to ask questions of authority figures, assert their independence in the classroom, and avoid using tradition as a reason for behavior (Calarco 2014; Kohn 1977; Kohn 1963; Lareau 2002). Weininger and Lareau (2009) point out that while traditional norms still operate in these settings, individuals are encouraged to make their own decisions rather than adhering to “required” behaviors.

Sanctions

The third requirement of social norms is the presence of sanctions for trespassing against traditional standards. Legal action is the most obvious form of sanction, which imposes material or physical hardship on an individual for breaking the law (Gibbs 1965). However, many of

these legal sanctions are also accompanied by social disapproval from peers, family members, and neighbors (Clampet-Lundquist, Edin, Kling, and Duncan 2011; Massoglia and Uggen 2010). Failure to adhere to workplace norms risk not only termination but also semi-public shaming (Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, and Moen 2010). Potential social sanctions also include gossip, harassment, and peer or romantic rejection (Lamont 2014; Liefbroer and Billari 2010; Settersten 1998). Sometimes, scholars identify sanction by the shame or embarrassment of the participant, rather than by the action of the norm-enforcer (Mollborn 2009).

Liefbroer and Billari (2010) provide perhaps the most comprehensive list of social sanctions with a national survey of Dutch attitudes towards family structures, but their data has several contradictions that are difficult to explain within a normative/deviant framework. For example, only 8-9% of participants disapprove of divorce when the couple does not have children, but a tremendous number of participants also would expect sanctioning behavior; 70.5% of participants expected gossip, 34.6% of people expected cursory remarks, and 21.7% of participants expected social avoidance. Meanwhile, for items with higher disapproval—having a child while single (~45%) and getting divorced with small children (~40%)—the number of individuals expecting sanctions is not substantively higher than items with low disapproval.

Why would Liefbroer and Billari (2010) find widespread evidence for social sanction but such low rates of disapproval? More than likely, it is because whether someone disapproves of a behavior is a question about them, while whether someone expects social sanctions is a question about others. After all, an individual might not personally judge premarital pregnancy, but can also be reasonably confident that premarital pregnancy risks social sanction. This measurement artifact reveals that an individual could be concerned about a behavior's potential negative consequences, even though that same person has no negative valuations of that behavior.

A Theory of Social Concern

There is no question that social norms exist. As Frank, Camp, and Boutcher (2010) show, behaviors such as sexual assault that inflict damage on another person are often stigmatized. And many social norms still exist even though no one is directly harmed, which is apparent through the contemporary use of breaching experiments in college classrooms (Garfinkel 1963; Rafalovich 2006). But social norms are not adequate to explain verbal social influence. Below, I sketch a theory of “social concern,” which complements existing approaches to social norms. When a person expresses a social norm, the goal is to align the recipient with a value statement. But when a person conveys social concern, the starting point is not a value statement, but concern for the welfare of the individual. This involves a *warning of risk* in lieu of applying social sanction; the warning is delivered recognizing the individual’s *autonomy* rather than an ultimatum; and the warning itself is *divorced from judgments of “good” or “bad” behavior*, to the point that the person expressing social concern may show approval of the behavior while simultaneously warning against it.

First, the starting point for “social concern” is not a value statement, but concern over the welfare of the individual. Although social norms are also a way to ensure safety and security, this is most important to ensure basic survival needs, which is no longer necessary in many Western contexts (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2008; Inglehart, Ponarin, and Inglehart Forthcoming). So when parents, teachers, and peers exert social influence the goal is not always necessarily to force compliance with a preexisting standard, but to impart wisdom about the best way to navigate complex institutions. For example, Lareau (2002: 748) finds middle-class parents develop their childrens’ autonomy in order to “[transmit] important life skills” which will benefit them as they enter school and work (see also: Calarco 2014). Similarly, if a person is concerned that their child or friend’s behavior could lead to potential social sanctions or other

negative outcomes (e.g., Harding 2009), they may *warn about the risk* of the intended course of action.

Second, individual choice is celebrated in culture, institutionalized through a series of political and human rights, and developed by psychology professionals and educational systems (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Bromley, Meyer, and Ramirez 2011; Frank and McEneaney 1999; Frank and Meyer 2002; Frank, Meyer, and Miyahara 1995; Robinson 2011; Rutherford 2004). Given that individuals often replace members of their social networks that they disagree with, people who attempt to exercise social influence will tread lightly to avoid damaging the relationship (Bello and Rolfe 2014; Vaisey and Lizardo 2010). Under these circumstances, a person may opt to recognize the participants' *autonomy* instead of imposing a requirement.

Third, social concern makes *little or no moral judgment* about the actual behavior. Because the starting point for social concern is worry about an individual's welfare—and not whether a person “should” or “should not” engage in a certain activity—there is no reason to pass moral judgment. As Liefbroer and Billari's (2010) data suggests, it is possible to see how a behavior might lead to negative outcomes even without disapproval of the behavior itself. In fact, there is reason to think that an action can be judged as morally worthy and dangerous at the same time. A person who runs into a burning building to save a life may win moral approval from friends and family, even as they furiously attempt to convince him or her to refrain.

The present theory bears some similarities to Willer, Kuwabara, and Macy's (2009) theory of unpopular norms, which states that privately held moral judgments may not align with public value statements. But a theory of unpopular norms does not explain inconsistency between a positive public value statement and discouragement for the activity. In contrast, the

theory of social concern argues that inconsistencies between public value statements and encouragement are not only possible, but expected.

The Present Case: Activism

Activism is an excellent case to examine alternative types of social influence because it has achieved some measure of respect in civic life, yet also entails some degree of risk and “marks” a person as unusual. It is a routinized behavior and viewed as central to democracy, with partisans on the left and the right viewing activism as a heroic undertaking. However, it also consistently challenges both a society’s values and political structure. Activism is both socially valued and runs counter to social values, a contradiction which the normative/deviant paradigm is not equipped to handle. Activism is thus a potential “black swan” case that can falsify existing theory, and reveal how an alternative form of social influence works whereas in other studies it is conflated with social norms (Flyvbjerg 2006: 228).

On one hand, there is evidence that social movement participation is somewhat normative. Activism has been constructed in modern understanding to be central to democracy (McCarthy and McPhail 1998; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). On both the left (Occupy Wall Street) and right (Tea Party) wing of politics, activism is viewed as a heroic undertaking to fight unjust circumstances. Wolf and Zuckerman (2012) note that many activists have become heroes; the narrative of activists standing up against powerful and unjust actors has become part of America’s mythology (see also: Griffin and Bollen 2009). Activism is even integrated into the daily work routines of otherwise non-political organizations, such as law firms (Boutcher 2013).

Because social movements are increasingly integrated into regular routines of civic life—and because civic life is viewed as a public good—we would expect substantial support for activism. Bolzendahl and Coffé (2013: 51) find that Americans strongly endorse voting and “keep[ing] a watch on the actions of government” as important parts of being a citizen;

Americans assign only slightly lower ratings for being active in a membership association and boycotting goods (or making ethical purchases). Furthermore, these expectations are shared by both Republicans and Democrats, and predict political activism (Bolzendahl and Coffé 2013; Coffé and Bolzendahl 2011; Straughn and Andriot 2011). Attitudes supporting civic and political participation are especially high among more recent birth cohorts and integrated into American social identities (Dalton 2008; Huddy and Khatib 2007; Knack 1992), meaning that broad social support for political behavior is probably here to stay.

On the other hand, what separates social movement behavior from other forms of political action is the willingness to step outside of conventional norms (McAdam 1999). Even as protest participation becomes institutionalized and routinized (McCarthy and McPhail 1998; Meyer and Tarrow 1998), more aggressive and risky forms of activism are gaining in popularity (Dodson 2011). Meanwhile, scholars and organizers note that the effectiveness of social movement strategy often depends on surprising the opponent (Jasper 2004). As a result, activists often break accepted patterns of interaction to fluster targets and gain an advantage. Furthermore, simple but surprising acts of civil disobedience can result in an aggressive legal response (e.g., Majeed 2012), and police responses to protest have become more aggressive in the last fifteen years (Gillham 2011).

Methods

Sampling

The present interviews are drawn from a larger sample of 192 college “social justice” activists attending 15 different colleges and universities. The colleges and universities include large public universities, small liberal arts colleges, and private research institutions across four different geographical regions. These colleges and universities generally admit high-achieving high school students, but they also have a high number of social justice organizations on campus.

I identified a complete list of undergraduate social justice organizations (SJOs) at each school, which I defined as organizations that attempted to change social, structural, and/or institutional relationships that perpetuate inequality and injustice. I asked every SJO to provide a list of all individuals graduating in Spring 2012 and who had either planned an event or run a meeting for the group. 161 of the 222 groups responded with a complete list of individuals and provided their email addresses; I contacted all 341 participants and 192 completed a web-based questionnaire in Fall 2011. I also invited all 192 participants to complete a second (in Spring 2013) and third (in Spring 2014) questionnaire.

During the first wave, I selected 31 of the 192 participants for a face-to-face interview. I chose to conduct all of the first wave interviews face-to-face in order to establish a rapport with the participants. Twenty-seven participants elected to participate in the first interview; all participants attended a single, large state university. I then invited all 27 participants who also completed the surveys at Wave II and Wave III to follow-up interviews. At Wave III, I also expanded the interview pool to include participants who had filled out the survey during Wave III and who did not complete an interview during Wave I. I selected all 34 participants who completed a survey during Wave III and who lived in one of five metropolitan areas; two in the southeastern United States, one in the northeast, one in the upper midwest, and one on the west coast. Twenty individuals from 11 different undergraduate institutions elected to participate. The interview sample size at each wave is listed in greater detail in Table 4.1, and the demographic characteristics of the sample are listed in Table 4.2. It is particularly important to note that the educational attainment of parents is very high. Because middle- and upper-class families are particularly likely to engage in “concerted cultivation,” we should expect to see a great deal of “social concern” in this sample as well (Lareau 2002: 748).

Data Collection

Approximately one-third of the survey questions were based on an egocentric name generator where participants were asked to list up to eight people whose opinions they value and who they had been in contact with over the prior 30 days. Participants almost always listed parents, siblings, and significant others at each wave; they also tended to list peers, although those peers tended to change after college graduation. Then, participants responded to the following prompt for each alter: “At this time, this person believes you should be putting time and effort into social justice participation” with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” In contrast to other questions that tap each alter’s own political beliefs or behavior, this question measures social support for the participant’s activist involvement.

The bulk of the data from this study comes from interview questions that use their survey answers as a prompt. In one portion of the semi-structured interviews, I asked participants to elaborate on their answers from the survey, and for them to tell me in their own words why each individual alter agreed or disagreed with their activist involvement. I began by asking them about each person they listed on the survey, and whether each alter supported the participant spending time on activism. My most frequent probe was to ask participants how they “knew” what their friends and family wanted them to do, with the goal of having them explain why each alter thought they should or should not be involved with activism. I also used probes to ensure that the participant was not just assuming what the alter wanted, and that they were not imputing their own opinions onto the alter (see Kandel 1978, for an example of this in quantitative studies). I also compared their responses to a previous question where I asked participants about each alter’s own activist involvement.

The questions about the participant's relationship with each alter came in the middle of each interview. I usually started interviews by asking participants how they got involved in activism, and then used verbal probes to elicit further responses about the same topic. I then asked them several questions about their relationship with alters; who they were, how they met them, and what sorts of activities they wanted the participant to spend time and effort on. Within each set of questions, my goal was to use probes to encourage participants to speak for long periods of time—and in great detail—about a relatively specific topic. The interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length, although a few interviews lasted over two hours.

Analysis

The initial goal of the analysis was to determine the nature of social support for activism. Thus, my original strategy was to code any part of an interview where the participant described an alter's opinions about activism. Then, I began to identify whether participants received feedback from alters that were supportive or opposed to activism. Most participants received neutral or weak positive messages from their peers. But despite the fact that much of the research on social support for activism categorizes support as "positive" or "negative," most participants received mixed messages from family members. Parents and siblings worried about the participant, told them they should stop, but communicated how much they respected their activism. Very few of the responses could be clearly classified as positive or negative, with most of them remaining ambiguous.

I then analyzed the data by looking at whether each alter's opinion could be related to a social norm. I looked for whether the alter's opinions were (1) a clear statement about what a person ought or ought not to do, (2) whether the person was expected to follow those rules, and (3) whether there was any sort of "punishment" for failing to follow expectations. With only a few exceptions—from participants whose parents grew up in countries with repressive

governments—there were virtually no examples of the three characteristics of norms. To generate the theory of social concern, I found codes that could be an example of the three characteristics of norms. I then closely examined the data associated with each code to identify whether it fit the normative/deviant paradigm, and grouped the differences between the data and the definition of social norms.

This particular analysis has one major limitation. While participants may experience social influence as “social concern” instead of “social norms,” a one-sided account of a conversation may not accurately represent the other side’s position. It is possible that what participants identified as “social concern” is more coercive than portrayed here; alternatively, it is possible that the expression of concern was intended as some sort of social sanction. However, this limitation is unlikely to seriously compromise the findings because social norms are—by definition—clear and accompanied by some sort of social sanction. Disparaging comments towards the participant, refusal to discuss deviant behaviors, and even physical violence are indicators of disapproval and sanctions; therefore, the presence of social norms should be apparent even from a one-sided conversation. Furthermore, social norms theory cannot account for positive support for activism coupled with an application of sanctions for participating. This contradiction of social norms theory suggests a different process entirely.

The present data also offers two major advantages. Since the goal of this study is to explore the nature of social influence—and how it differs from the normative/deviant binary—I can use the interview data to clearly analyze the (a) positive or negative interpretation of behaviors, (b) the expectations surrounding behavior, and (c) whether the participant experienced social sanctions. Second, because activism is a relatively rare behavior, it is likely that many people never experience any sort of social influence to engage in or avoid activism; non-activists

likely cannot report much social influence to engage or disengage with activism. The present data, however, offers the ability to examine the positive or negative interpretation, expectations, and social sanctions associated with a behavior that may demonstrate the limitations of norms-based approaches.

Findings

In this section, I report the extent to which the activists I interviewed fit the normative/deviant paradigm. According to Gibbs (1965), a norm is statement about what a person *should* or *should not* do; a statement *requiring* a person to conform to the ideal; and some sort of *sanction* to punish individuals who do not adhere to the expected behavior. I gave several prompts in the interviews asking whether friends and family supported their decision to be involved with or abstain from activism, and almost none of the responses fit any of Gibbs' three criteria.

Instead, participants largely described that family and friends offered a form of "social concern" rather than communicating and enforcing norms. Social concern differs from social norms in three important ways: First, participants do not face direct *interpersonal sanctions* for engaging in activism but are warned about *risks* to their future employment opportunities; these warnings are often about the risk of sanctions from an employer. Second, participants are not *required* to avoid activism because individuals are supposed to take control over their own lives; instead, the suggestion that they stop participating in activism recognizes the participants' *autonomy*. Third, there is no expression of moral disapproval. In fact, friends and family often *support* an activist's work, even as they express *concern* about *risk*.

Warnings of Risk, Not Social Sanction

Under traditional norms, we would expect deviant behavior to be subject to *interpersonal sanctions*. For example, if activism was considered deviant instead of normative, a person

attending a protest might be the recipient of disapproving comments about activism. However, parents did not deliver interpersonal sanctions, but instead repeatedly delivered the message that their actions may damage their future economic position. Parents seemed unconcerned with the legal consequences of being arrested, or being shunned by friends; it was that the participant was risking future damage to their economic prospects. Frequently, they were *warning about the risks* of sanctions applied by employers.

One of the most common refrains that participants heard from family members was fear that the participant would be arrested. However, participants did not interpret being arrested as a problem by itself. After all, most arrests at protests rarely move into serious legal sanction. However, there is a persistent fear among activists and their families that having an arrest record or otherwise associating with a movement would damage their ability to obtain a job. This was particularly striking because I never asked any participant whether they had ever been arrested; it instead repeatedly came up when discussing relationships with family members. For example, one participant, whose father largely agreed with her political beliefs and who repeatedly expressed admiration for protestors, said:

I think that [my dad] would consider being arrested a very taboo thing, especially as a young person who is about to enter the working world and have that on my record. I think he would be concerned about that. I think he supports a lot of people who are getting, a lot of the older folks who were getting arrested at Moral Monday and that sort of thing. He's like "there's not as much at risk. They've gotten further along than you, you know?" But I think for me, he would be like that would be, it would be hard for him to process me having an arrest on my record...so his friend, [Joey], got arrested at [protest] and his wife [was also arrested]. My dad [said that] he himself would rather him be arrested than me...I think he just knows I haven't yet started a career, what he would consider to be a career. He knows from hearing past and present things from people that if you have something like that on your record, it's much harder to get a position, especially a faculty position or something like that. Which is something that he thinks, when I talk to him about things that I could do potentially in the future, I like talking about being professor or working for a government body or a nonprofit or all these other things...I think he's like if...there is a lot of people

getting arrested in the older generation that is a very great sign of a pushback from people, but he's tentative about, like apprehensive about me doing that. (104, Wave 3)

This interview highlights that participants often received positive messages about activism in the abstract, and viewed getting arrested at a protest as morally worthy. However, he warned the participant against protesting anyway. Even though the participant says that her father sees the arrest as a "very taboo thing," the concern is not state punishment or that their friends will shun them. Rather, the problem is presented in terms of an economic risk; there is the possibility of sanction from future employers because she has little work history. He contrasts this with his friend who was arrested, who he openly supports. However, his friend has a work history that employers could look to. The state or social sanction is not viewed as a problem, but his *concern* that there is a high risk of economic sanctions for younger workers.

Another participant noted that her scholarship could be tied to her legal status, and that she had to be careful to abide by the law or else it might be revoked. Her parents were extremely concerned that she might be arrested and her scholarship would be revoked, and was warned against going to protests. She did limit her protesting activity as a result. For her, the risk of being arrested and then having her scholarship revoked was too high:

Because I have a scholarship...and if I protest and get arrested or protest and get punished in any type of way, I could get that taken away...you can't have an education if you don't have the money to pay for it so it's this ongoing cycle of you have to get an education, then you then you can fight. I mean, I shouldn't completely stop fighting, but just know that I have to scale back and how I strategize and use tactics... at lots of things that we do, police just arrest indiscriminately. Like we went to this [government meeting] when they were trying to [make local changes to education policy] and they were just arresting people for wanting to speak at the meeting and just for being there. Even though it's supposed to be legally open meetings, they closed them to us so we were out there protesting with our signs and stuff. So [my parents] know that the risk is high when [the police] aren't acknowledging what you have the right to do. (116, Wave 1)

In other parts of the interview, she spoke about the history of the civil rights movement and her family's involvement in it. She mentioned that her parents thought it was important to fight for causes you believed in, but also were concerned about her future educational and economic prospects. In no part of the interview did she mention that it was guaranteed that she would be arrested, or even that it was guaranteed that an arrest would lead to her scholarship being revoked. She indicated that it was possible, but the problem was framed in terms of risk: While activism is a worthy goal, it is important to be strategic to manage the potential downsides and avoid jeopardizing future goals. This tension between the democratic ideals of activism and the perils of risk was summarized by her sister, who said:

[My sister] acknowledges that, hey, there's people doing great work...and she's like YOU PERSONALLY don't have to be doing it...she doesn't agree that I should put...a lot of time and effort into it. [116, Wave 1]

One participant had never been arrested and had never given any indication that she would consider civil disobedience. She reported that her parents shared many of her political views, but were concerned that her volunteer work might prevent her from getting a job someday.

[F]or the most part we do agree—for the most part—on our political views, but as my mother she would like me to be careful, these issues I sort of throw my weight behind. And specifically, the organizations I write down on my resume because she is worried about me being able to get a job in the future. (108, Wave 1)

In some ways, the participant's story resembles a traditional story about deviance. The participant was involved in an activist organization, which worried the participants' mother, who was concerned that by being involved with a feminist organization she would receive negative reactions from potential employers in the future. But if the mother considered this a deviant activity, the mother would not be personally supportive of the involvement with political organizations. She was not delivering interpersonal sanctions, although she was well aware that

others might. Thus, her concern was about how her daughter would be perceived in the context of the labor market, and that doing so would increase the risk of her not finding stable employment. Rather than *interpersonal sanction* such as disparaging remarks or refusal to talk to the participant, the message delivered is to be careful and manage *risk* appropriately.

Autonomy, Not Control

Under traditional norms, participants learn that they are *required* to avoid certain types of behavior. For example, if activism was considered deviant instead of normative, a person attending a protest may learn that their parents and friends expect them to stop. However, in this study parents did not expect their children to stop participating in activism. As one participant noted, “I think my parents had long ago surrendered that I was going to do whatever I wanted to do anyway.” In lieu of requiring their children to conform to expectations, they recognized the *autonomy* of the participant, even if they worried about their behavior.

In the interviews, I repeatedly asked participants whether specific friends and family support their decision to engage in activism. According to participants, family members usually defer to the participants’ own judgment. There were certainly things that the participant was forbidden from doing—such as committing violence in the name of a cause—but for the most part, participants were free to perform whatever actions they preferred even if it hurt them later.

For example, one participant said:

[F]or the most part [my grandfather is] like "As long as you're doing you." That's the modern term for it, but "As long as you're not doing anything dangerous," which he knows me well enough that I'm not. As long as I'm not doing anything dangerous or putting other people at risk or, you know-- I mean that's basically it. (120, Wave 3)

The reason that parents frequently deferred to participants, even if they thought a course of action was unwise, was because they felt they would not be able to control the participant. In those cases, the parent did their best to be honest about their opinions with the participant while

not jeopardizing their relationship. For example, one participant reported that her mother would deliver her disapproval of activism through “half-jokes”:

I was part of the [big local protest]. So we...marched from [the Quad] to the [President’s Office]. And the next day I saw...a picture in the [student newspaper] of a group of students in the protest I was part of blocking traffic. I saw this giant bus right behind us and I had no idea about that or that there were that many people out there. I knew that I just felt good and I just felt like, “Wow, we’ve got a lot of people here.” I didn’t realize it looked like that. And my mom called me [and said], “Please don’t go to jail. Stop hanging out with those people.” And she says it jokingly because at this point she knows that it’s not going to prevent me from doing it. (118, Wave 1)

In this case, her mother wanted to express concern about her daughter’s behavior, but was unable to directly forbid participation because it would contravene her daughter’s individuality. As a result, she recognized her daughter’s right to perform actions by framing her disapproval as a joke. In another case, a participant’s parents supported a campaign he was involved with, but were worried about his emotional state if the campaign would fail. Rather dissuade him from participating, they expressed concern and tried to manage the emotional letdown from the loss:

They were supportive of it. They let me place a sign in our front yard, which is a big deal, you know...they knew that it was important to me enough to be supportive it. They went out and put out for it. I think they were a little more realistic and they kind of like “it’s probably [not going to work]” but even I knew that but you still have to show up...It was just the statement of it. They just try to tamp down my expectations... (131, Wave 3)

In this interview, the participant’s parents found ways to communicate that they did not agree with their child’s decision to spend time on activism while not trampling on individual self-expression. Articulating concern for a child’s well-being does not communicate that the parent “expects” or “requires” anything from the child, but communicates that they think the child’s decision has negative consequences. In another example, a participant’s mother often presented themselves to their children as agreeing with the message of the activism, while

expressing caution about the outcome. She said her mother “wanted” to support her, but claims she does not want to see her daughter get hurt by failure.

In some ways she's weary of people being too idealistic because it's dangerous to be too idealistic... I think she wanted to support my endeavors to change the world more than anything. I don't know whether she believed that I could do it, but she wanted to support me on it. (108, Wave 3)

Overall, this quote represents how family members communicate concern about behaviors while emphasizing the participants’ autonomy. Under the traditional definition of norms, a parent would *expect or require* their child to adhere to a course of action that did not violate community standards. However, doing this would constitute an attack on her child’s *autonomy*, and therefore she expresses concern for her child’s well-being. Overall, expressing concern allows a parent or friend to communicate an opinion, while reinforcing that the participant is responsible for his or her own life choices.

Pride in Activism, Despite the Risk

Under traditional norms, people are given a message about what they *should or should not do*, and then are presented with an expectation to conform to—and a sanction they do not. For example, if activism was considered deviant instead of normative, a person may know that attending a protest would be offensive to many people; those people will expect the person to stop attending protests, and criticize the person if they do not conform. However, when family and friends are concerned over an individual’s level of risk, it does not necessarily mean that family and friends disagree morally with the individual. In fact, parents and friends often paradoxically *support* an activist’s work, even as they discourage them from doing it.

Activism involves some deviant characteristics—challenging common laws and norms (e.g., around gender roles) and utilizing atypical methods (e.g., protesting). This means that friends and family often attempt to dissuade an activist from involvement in social causes.

However, a core aspect of deviance is that it runs counter to existing social values; participants reported their friends and family were proud of their activist behavior, even when they were concerned about the risks it entailed. For example, one participant related that her father was concerned about her getting arrested, and wished she would spend more time on her schoolwork. But at the same time, he related he was proud of her activism:

[My father tells] me that he's really proud about what I'm doing. And he's told me on several occasions he's really proud of what I'm doing and that he finds it really amazing...I talked to him this weekend and he told me, he said that "You do really good things. I'm so proud of you; you're such a great kid."

This viewpoint was shared across her friends as well—even those who disagreed with her:

In general, everybody that I know, like even my grandpa, everybody supports me doing what I do. And even people that have contrary views in my life, they support what I do. Like my roommate from first year, she is a Republican and she keeps telling me, "Oh, I really respect all the things that you do. Like you're doing good," and so forth.

In other words, the participants were praised by their friends and family not necessarily for expressing shared values, but for activism itself. Furthermore, parents, friends, and significant others did not always praise the ideology a person held, but praised them as doing "really good things" or "good work", and that they were "proud" of what they are doing. In several different interviews, participants noted that their significant others don't share their specific political orientation but praise them nonetheless. One woman described her husband as a libertarian who does not necessarily share many of her political values. At one point in the interview, I asked her what his opinion was about her work:

[W]hen we talk about things, he'll...he'll usually say like, I support you, like I've seen the work that you do. I roped him in for some of our computer program related things, cause I was like...you're [a computer scientist] and we need a volunteer, and so...but he...through that he is able to see, and he meets a lot of [organization] members ...just through events and various things. So I think, his response was well, I've seen firsthand the work you do. It seems pretty great...it's good work. (211, Wave 3)

Another woman described her parents as apprehensive when she was going to protests. They were especially concerned about arrest records, but they also were concerned because they were not involved with protest in their youth. Since they had never experienced protest before, they felt that the risks of going to protests were particularly high. But she also noticed that they had wanted to hear more about her work, and had communicated their approval to her:

It's something that's very new to them. The idea of protesting and all of that sort of stuff. They were never personally involved in any of it, so, of course, they're cautious at first, and I'm their daughter ...[but] they're proud of what I'm doing. (115, Wave 3)

Under the traditional definition of norms, a parent would try to direct them away from activities which they find morally problematic; they would then expect the child to conform and apply social sanctions if they disagreed. However, when parents express concern about risk, it does not imply any moral disagreement. In fact, parents often tried to dissuade their child from doing things they were *proud* of, and friends would express that they were proud of activism that ran counter to their own political beliefs. This “pride” at “good work” is because activism represents modern values of democratic participation—that involvement in matters of public policy is a good and moral activity. Expressing that a certain behavior (activism) is valued but that they should stop is fundamentally incompatible with the traditional formulation of norms; on the other hand, it is consistent with a more general “social concern” framework where freedom is valued, but family members are concerned about risks to the individual.

Discussion

This study examines how actors perceive social influence, and whether the construct of a “social norm” might be conflated with alternative forms of social influence. Most social theory suggests that people learn how to behave from the expectations of others. Some behaviors are classified as “good” and are encouraged and rewarded with moral approval, while “bad”

behavior and roles are discouraged and punished by some type of disapproval. As Liefbroer and Billari (2010) state, social norms have been central to the sociological enterprise from Durkheim (1938) to the present day. Thus, this study began as an attempt to extend the normative/deviant paradigm to activism. I analyze interviews with current and former activists over a period of three years but find very little evidence for social norms; in fact, individuals often report that friends and family warned them from activism, yet expressed pride in their political activities.

To explain these findings, I draw from research on individualization and class differences in parenting practices to develop an alternative form of social influence. First, participants do not face *interpersonal sanctions* for trespassing social norms but *warned about risks* to their future employment opportunities. Second, participants are not *required* to avoid activism because individuals are supposed to take control over their own lives; instead, the suggestion that they stop participating in activism is framed against the autonomy of the participant. Third, because participating in democracy is valued, friends and family *support* an activist's work, even as they express *concern* about *risk*. The transformation of sanctions into risks, of requirements into acknowledgement of autonomy, and the discouragement of individuals from undertaking a socially valued activity demonstrate that the existing normative/deviant paradigm is not sufficient for explaining how explicit social influence works. This is not a type of norm, but rather a more general type of "social concern" where friends and family attempt to prevent negative outcomes, but with recognition that telling another person what to do is no longer permitted; furthermore, this is largely disconnected from moral evaluations of the risky behavior.

One question that this study is not equipped to answer is whether this expression of "social concern" is actually some sort of social norm in disguise. But no matter how the analyst answers these questions, the result disproves some aspect of the normative/deviant paradigm. I

take the position that social concern is fundamentally different than social norms. For example, some may interpret the expression of concern as a type of sanction, but this is radically different than any sanction previously identified in the literature. Sanctions include shaming, shunning, gossip, harassment, or peer/romantic rejection (Lamont 2014; Liefbroer and Billari 2010; Massoglia and Uggen 2010; Settersten 1998); there is nothing in the expressions of concern that even resembles these actions. But the bigger issue is that norms are about aligning behavior with a value standard, and the present findings suggest that people will actually discourage a morally valued activity. While there is evidence that people will emphasize one value standard publicly and another privately (Willer, Kuwabara, and Macy 2009), the normative/deviant paradigm cannot account for a situation where parents and friends are *openly proud* of the participants' actions while *discouraging* involvement. Thus, I argue this is something different.

However, the analyst may reject “social concern” as a distinct phenomenon from a “social norm”; the critical reader might argue that “social concern” is simply how social norms are expressed in the modern era. If so, this is much worse news for the normative/deviant paradigm, since it would mean that we live in an Orwellian world where expressions of concern are social sanctions, that telling someone that it is their “choice” is actually a requirement to adhere, and that that public praise for an activity is actually a sanction against it. If modern norms involve the norm-enforcer saying the exact opposite of what they mean, our conception of what “social norms” look like is utterly incorrect.

That said, there is evidence that norms still exist in a more traditional form. Norms that prohibit harming another person have probably become stronger, simple breaching experiments reveal that violations of social convention can still shock others, and remnants of traditional norms still exist (Frank, Camp, and Boutcher 2010; Mollborn 2009; Rafalovich 2006). In other

words, social concern probably exists concurrently with more traditional norms, rather than replacing them. But this study only demonstrates that an alternative form of social influence exists, with several caveats. Activism is only one type of behavior among many, and we are particularly likely to see it in college-educated individuals like the present sample. This study cannot examine the types of relationships where social concern is most likely to occur, nor how widespread it is. Thus, I suggest three research agendas for sociologists and social psychologists.

First, future scholarship in this area should first identify *when* social concern emerges. For example, we should expect social concern to be more common in power-equivalent peer relationships than in adult-child ones. Additionally, it is possible that alters only express social concern for certain types of behaviors and life choices. These could be assessed through survey experiments by manipulating either the target of influence or the issue topic. Second, we should investigate *who* is most likely to prefer influencing others with social concern instead of social norms. In particular, we would expect the presence of social concern to vary by demographic background. We would expect middle class parents to express more social concern as part of concerted cultivation (Lareau 2002); on the other hand, certain religious groups may favor traditional social norms as part of an authoritarian parenting strategy (Danson, Hunsberger, and Pratt 1997). Therefore, we need more careful research to delineate the extent to which social concern is replacing or complementing social norms.

Finally, we should investigate *when* social concern influences behavior. Social concern is often multi-dimensional, and future research should first empirically assess how influential positive-negative valuations are compared to messages about the risk of a behavior (Friedkin and Johnsen 2011). In these cases, asking whether activism or any type of behavior is “positively” or “negatively” evaluated by alters may be the wrong question; activism, like many behaviors, is

valued or treated as neutral in the abstract but discouraged for individual participants. Then, we should assess the relative effectiveness of social concern compared to social norms, especially how each type of influence is transmitted through social networks. Are they equally effective? Does it depend on an individual's position in a network? Or does it depend on who expresses the opinion within the network? Following this research agenda would give us a more accurate image of how social influence develops, as well as its role in structuring behavior.

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Table 4.1. Description of Participation at Different Waves

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Survey	N=192	N=125	N=132
Interview	N=27 at one university	N=18 from original sample	N=20 participants from original sample; N=19 from survey across 5 different metro areas

Table 4.2. Demographic Composition of Interview Participants

	Proportion	Standard Deviation
Female	0.72	0.45
Non-White	0.38	0.49
Non-Heterosexual	0.30	0.47
High Parent Education < 4 Year Degree	0.18	0.39
High Parent Education = 4 Year Degree	0.38	0.49
High Parent Education = Graduate Degree	0.44	0.50

CHAPTER 5: THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE

This study began as a way to look at social movement participation from a new perspective, and there are enough new findings to show that social movements scholars could benefit from a life course approach. The present findings show that opportunity, not availability or social support, is the primary reason for declines in activist participation; that the types of individuals entering paid and volunteer activism are not the same; and that modern social movement participation is governed by “social concern” rather than social guidance. I discuss these findings, and the implications for social movements research, within each individual chapter. However, the present findings also have implications for life course research. I will discuss these here.

What is the life course perspective?

First, it is useful to give an overview of the theoretical principles of the life course. Identifying what constitutes “life course sociology” is not particularly clear. Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2003: 4) define life course sociology as the study of “age-graded patterns that are embedded in social institutions and history”—a fine definition, but relatively vague. Their life course principles likewise consist of several phrases so broad that they provide little research guidance; however, their explanations of each principle make clear that most are reactions to the narrow psychological study of child development and Parsonian social theory.

- 1) *Human development and aging are lifelong processes*: They argue that human development continues well into adulthood, which contrasts with the traditional psychological fixation on child development. Older variants of developmental

psychology suggest individuals change relatively little in adulthood, although the emergence of life-span developmental psychology has tempered this tendency (Baltes 1987). The notion that children change, but adults are fully formed carries over to Parsonian theory, which focuses heavily on the notion of adults socializing children into appropriate behavior (Parsons and Shils 2001).

- 2) *Individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstance:* Although Parsonian social theory does include a conception of agency, the focus is squarely on the normative and structural rules that force compliance (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Although this may seem deterministic, it is even less deterministic than many psychological theories which posit that behavior at different ages is the result of a biological maturation process, altered only by traumatic experiences and external stimulation (Dannefer 1984). In these approaches, people are largely passive recipients of social structure, which then dictates their behavior. Life course sociology explicitly rejects this view with a neo-Meadian approach that emphasizes the inherent creativity of individual choice (Hitlin and Elder 2007). This agency is often most visible in uncertain situations with many options, such as life course transitions (Heinz 2009; Marshall 2005).
- 3) *The life course of individuals is embedded and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime:* Where many developmental psychologists view human development as a fixed maturation process, life course sociologists emphasize that the life course is socially constructed. Individuals are expected to perform different roles and tasks at different ages; thus, people change as they get older because social norms dictate that they should (Elder 1975; Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965).

Furthermore, the timing of life course transitions is regulated by government incentives and the institutional relationships between education and work (Kerckhoff 2003; Mayer and Schoepflin 1989). Finally, life course sociologists study “turning points” that change life trajectories. While turning points can come from forming important social relationships (e.g., Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 1993), the primary focus is on historical events that change the developmental trajectories of some cohorts more than others (Elder 1999).

- 4) *The developmental antecedents and consequences of life transitions, events, and behavioral patterns vary according to their timing in a person's life:* Unlike the other principles, which challenge developmental psychology or Parsonian social theory, this principle expresses the fundamental cornerstone of research on human development: That earlier life events have an effect on later ones. Individuals are more resilient to trauma at some ages than others; while people may be more resilient to physical abuse later in life, the effect of economic downturns are felt the most by people about to enter the labor market (Elder 1999; Lynch and Smith 2005). Furthermore, a life course transition (such as parenthood) that happens too early or too late can lead to negative life outcomes (George 1993). Finally, cumulative advantage processes operate throughout life, where early exposure to resources and hardship can multiply over time (DiPrete and Eirich 2006; Elman and O’Rand 2004; Willson, Shuey, and Elder 2007).
- 5) *Lives are lived interdependently and socio-historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships:* This research principle looks at the effects of family members, teachers, peers, and neighbors on human development (Bronfenbrenner 2009). The corollary to this principle is that people live in multiple contexts over the course of

their lives. Work transitions for a parent may lead to family upheaval for the child, and couples attempt to synchronize their work and family careers (Marshall and Mueller 2003). The study of linked lives theoretically investigates the effects of all social ties, but in practice all of the research on linked lives are done on family members (e.g., Elder and Conger 2014); the major exception is the study of peer influences on anti-social behavior (e.g., Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 1993).

Ultimately, life course sociology can be viewed as the most fully-formed offshoot of Mills' (1959: 159) conception of sociology: A discipline characterized by the "study of biography, of history, and of the problems of their intersection within social structure" that rejects the Parsonian framework (see also: Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). However, it is an area of research influenced by—and in opposition to—the dominant approaches to studying human development fifty years ago. Its focus on work, family, health, and social psychology has meant it is in constant theoretical dialogue with those fields (Mayer 2009). Confronting issues within those fields means that life course sociology is forced to reevaluate its own theories, which benefit all life course sociologists. Given the distant theoretical roots of social movement theory (see: Morris 2000), the study of activist lives over time may yield new insights for the field as a whole.

Challenges for Life Course Research

Using the present case—activism in the transition out of college—forces us to confront a number of issues in life course research that have not been fully acknowledged. Because this study looks at a single life course transition, the findings in this study say nothing about whether aging is a lifelong process. Similarly, while this study takes a more liberal view of linked lives—looking at how social ties influence activism—there is nothing about that aspect of the study that challenges life course sociology. However, studying activism provides opportunities to test

agency, raises questions about how life course sociologists consider context and place, and suggests that the field's traditional focus on social norms should be re-examined.

First, life course sociologists posit that individual agency plays a role in the life course (Elder 1994; Hitlin and Elder 2007; Marshall 2005). This is probably an untestable assertion, since social structure conditions people to choose what they can achieve (Bourdieu and Nice 1984). Furthermore, the assertion of agency is in tension with life course sociology's focus on social structure, where people respond to the norms and laws put before them (Mayer and Schoepflin 1989; Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965). The result is a paradigm where sociologists repeatedly look at cases where state incentives/sanctions and normative expectations lead to outcomes that people already want and can achieve.⁸ Whether agency is defined as an individual's choice or as the power to enact those choices, this means that in most cases a person's agency is confounded with the options provided.

If agency truly is an important part of the life course, then sociologists should avoid repeatedly choosing cases where incentives, sanctions, desires, and the ability to enact those desires are so thoroughly confounded. Agency should be most visible when the options available to an individuals are either confusing or undesirable—such as the chaotic transition to work in the United States, or when an event is subject to both sanctions and praise. While this dissertation does not directly measure agency, this particular setting provides a textbook case to investigate it. Activists receive confusing messages about their participation in social movements, as they are subject to both praise and sanction (Chapter 4); meanwhile, the transition to work in the United States requires individuals to make decisions in a new context without the

⁸ Although as I will discuss later, the conception of social norms in the life course is problematic as well.

weight of experience (Settersten Jr. and Ray 2010). Finally, with varying levels of structural support and possible sanctions for activism (Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4), it provides an excellent opportunity to look at the relationship between opportunity, choice, and resistance.

Second, the core of life course sociology is a focus on age-graded patterns and behaviors. According to sociologists, the life course is socially constructed; people move through age-graded life course transitions that are governed by the state, the institutional link between education and work, and social norms. Both Chapter 2 and 3 confirm that educational institutions play a substantial role in activist participation. However, the signature issues of role responsibilities and social norms play no role in activist participation. The responsibilities and commitments of post-college life—operationalized here as biographical availability—have no effect on activist participation. Similarly, age-graded social support barely shifts as people graduate from college, indicating little evidence for age-graded norms. Instead, this study finds that it is a shift in physical context—and its resulting opportunities—that changes age-graded patterns in activist behavior. In Chapter 2, I show that individuals who are in college are surrounded by a physical and social system that provides incredible opportunity to be involved with activism, and after graduation they are not.

Unfortunately, life course sociology pays almost no attention to how age-graded shifts in physical contexts generate life course patterns. This is a glaring omission in the life course literature, since one of its paradigmatic principles is that “the life course of individuals is embedded and shaped by the historical times *and places* they *experience over their lifetime*” (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003: 12, emphasis mine). And yet, life course sociology primarily focuses on how historical context affects developmental trajectories many years later, ignoring the age-graded social contexts people inhabit across life course transitions. While early-life

events may have profound developmental consequences, people still respond to immediate changes in social context. Thus, future research needs to take into account how contextual change mediates the relationship between age and behavior. An integration of life course sociology and migration studies would be particularly fruitful; residential changes are frequently related to life course transitions, and thus many of the behavioral changes observed around life course transitions may be due to contextual differences.

Finally, sociologists have spent an incredible amount of time researching how socially prescribed norms at different ages affect the life course. While Neugarten's early formulation of age-graded life course norms has been softened over time, most life course sociologists still argue that they are the primary reason for age-differentiated behavior and transitions (Elder 1975; Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003; Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965; Settersten 2003; Settersten and Mayer 1997). But in Chapter 2, I find no effects of social support for social movement participation on activism. In fact, activism actually declines approximately two years before social support falls, suggesting that friends and family actually adjust their support for the activist based on what they are already doing. In theory, social norms involve a fixed value statement, so if this is an age-graded norm then friends and family are actually changing the value statement to match whatever the participant is already doing.

This unexpected finding leads to the third and final implication for life course theory—that perhaps what we call “age-graded norms” are not actually norms. In Chapter 4, I examine the qualitative interview data to look for age-graded social norms for activist participation, and find that there are none. However, I do find a form of social influence that bears superficial resemblance to social norms, which I label “social concern.” Whereas social norm-holders use sanctions to deter people from violating cultural values, people who express social concern issue

warnings about potential negative outcomes. Family members try to steer the participants away from activism because they are worried about sanctions levied in the job market, *not* because it violates their value system. In fact, family members see the participants' activism as worthy, and praise the participants for their actions.

Given that social concern shares many superficial characteristics with social norms, it is likely that we have been confusing the two in empirical research. Value statements do not always guide social influence; a theory of social concern states that while friends and family recognize that everyone needs to find their own way in the world, they will try to help others avoid negative outcomes such as job loss. Thus, the theory of age-graded norms—which states young adults need to finish their education, move out of the family home, get a job, get married, and have children by a certain age—misses the point. Friends and family probably don't hold an abstract value system that *requires* a person to fulfill these markers (Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965; Settersten 1998); they *want* the person to fulfill them because they want him or her to be healthy, happy, and secure. In the current economic system, education is virtually required to get a good job; good jobs usually pay well and have health insurance; and the extrinsic rewards can be used for necessities like food, medicine, and shelter. Similarly, their reasons for hoping their child finds love and has children is probably because they think it will bring them joy—although the desire to become grandparents may also play a role. A theory of social concern would posit that family and friends encourage people to stick to common age-graded timing not out of institutional loyalty, but because they want the best for the people they care about.

Overall, this dissertation helps show that life course sociologists could benefit from entering new research domains. While family, work, and health are important life course

domains, exploring other areas from a life course perspective forces researchers to integrate new theories and methodologies into their standard practice. In the present case, theories about social movements such as biographical availability, social support, and local opportunities provided the impetus to test role requirements, social norms, and contextual effects in new ways. By reaching into other areas of sociology—such research on migration, social networks, urban areas, and organizations—sociologists can bring new perspectives into the study of lives over time.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATION IN WAVES 1-4 AND SUMMARY STATISTICS

Out of the original 192 participants, a large number participated in each wave. Table A1 details the sample size for each wave. Overall, Waves 2-4 include approximately one-third of the participants from the original sample.

Table A1. Sample Size in Waves 1 through 4

Wave	N
One	192
Two	125
Three	132
Four	114

To examine the participation across waves in more detail, I present the proportion of the original sample that completed each combination of waves in Table A2. For example, 46% of the original sample has completed all four waves, while 9% of the sample has completed the first three waves but not the fourth. Only 20% of the sample has not completed a survey after the first wave.

Table A2. Patterns of Participation Across Waves 1 through 4

<u>Participation Per Wave</u>				<u>Proportion of Original Sample</u>
<u>Wave 1</u>	<u>Wave 2</u>	<u>Wave 3</u>	<u>Wave 4</u>	
X	X	X	X	0.46
X		X	X	0.08
X	X	X		0.09
X	X		X	0.04
X	X			0.06
X		X		0.06
X			X	0.02
X				0.20

I present the demographic characteristics of the sample at each wave in table A3. Despite some attrition during Waves 2-4, the demographic composition of the original sample did not change much from one wave to the next. Overall, the original sample has a very large number of individuals who have at least one parent with a graduate degree (58%). The sample also includes a large number of individuals who are non-white (39%), and who are non-heterosexual (30%). While this does not reflect the general population of students, it does partially reflect the prevalence of identity politics on residential college campuses. This is further underscored by a detailed breakdown of participation in different issue areas, listed in Table A4. Large numbers of participants are involved in ethnic/minority or LGBT political organizations (14.66% and 20.42%, respectively). Of course, there is a substantial difference between the number of non-white individuals in the sample and in participating in ethnic/minority political groups (39% versus 14.66%). Similarly, not all non-heterosexual individuals are involved in LGBT rights groups (30% versus 20.42%).

Table A3. Demographic Composition of Participants from Waves 1 through 4

Variable	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4	
	Proportion	SD	Proportion	SD	Proportion	SD	Proportion	SD
Female	0.68	0.47	0.64	0.48	0.68	0.47	0.68	0.47
Non-White	0.39	0.49	0.38	0.49	0.36	0.48	0.35	0.48
Non-Heterosexual	0.3	0.46	0.35	0.48	0.33	0.47	0.31	0.46
Parents: Less than 4 Year Degree	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.35	0.13	0.34	0.15	0.36
Parents: 4 Year Degree	0.27	0.45	0.25	0.44	0.26	0.44	0.25	0.44
Parents: Graduate Degree	0.58	0.5	0.61	0.49	0.61	0.49	0.59	0.49

Table A4. Detailed Participation in Issue Areas.

Issue Area	Percent of Sample Involved with Issue Area
Labor	2.62%
Immigrant Rights	4.71%
Environmental Justice	18.75%
Feminist	13.09%
Racial/Ethnic Minority Politics	14.66%
Anti-Oppression Awareness	8.85%
LGBT Rights	20.42%
Anti-Sexual Assault	9.95%
International Human Rights	11.98%
Anti-Capitalism	3.65%
Anti-American Imperialism	4.19%
Other	15.10%

APPENDIX B: ALTERNATIVE FIXED-EFFECTS SPECIFICATIONS

I present several alternative specifications in Table B1 to test the robustness of Model 6. These include a tobit model to account for the fact that participants cannot volunteer negative hours of activism; an interaction between undergraduate student status and biographical availability to see if required hours impacts activism differently in college versus post college; an interaction of sex by biographical availability and educational status to determine whether women's responsibilities are larger than men's, given the same number of required hours; and two models that replicate Model 6 but excluding outliers, one excluding all observations more than 3 standard deviations away from the grand mean and another excluding all observations where the participant volunteered more than 30 hours per week for activist causes. In all specifications, the organizational opportunity remains statistically significant. Additionally, social support for activism is occasionally statistically significant, but the relationship is very unstable. For example, social support for activism is statistically significant when a few outliers are discarded, but not when many outliers are discarded. These results reinforce the main findings of Model 6; that organizational opportunity is statistically significant, but much smaller than the effect of undergraduate student status as a whole.

Additionally, in Table B2 I present three additional models that test for nonlinear relationships between biographical availability and activist participation. In the first model, I include a quadratic term for biographical availability; in the second model, I include a quadratic term for biographical availability but no linear term; and in the fourth model I include a linear, quadratic, and cubic term for biographical availability. None of the variables representing biographical availability are statistically significant in any of the models.

Table B1. Alternative Fixed Effects Specifications

	Model 6	Tobit Model	Undergrad Interaction	Female Interactions	Outliers: 3 SDs	Outliers: 30 Hrs
Undergraduate Status	7.524* (2.740)	29.71** (9.781)	17.41* (6.800)	7.379* (3.017)	6.130** (2.037)	5.773 (2.744)
Graduate Student Status	-3.940 (2.993)	0.118 (3.881)	-3.994 (3.076)	-6.021* (2.783)	2.735* (1.229)	-0.0900 (1.953)
Biographical Unavailability	-0.190 (0.117)	-0.366 (0.232)	-0.141 (0.106)	-0.207 (0.107)	-0.0188 (0.0316)	-0.108 (0.0561)
Social Support for Activism	3.253 (1.623)	9.470* (4.224)	3.219 (1.630)	3.203 (1.689)	1.104 (0.635)	1.748* (0.700)
Organizational Opportunity (Ties)	0.783* (0.271)	1.311** (0.433)	0.839** (0.278)	0.784* (0.275)	0.433** (0.137)	0.643* (0.268)
Face-to-Face Percent	1.722 (4.095)	6.074 (7.880)	1.598 (3.954)	1.843 (4.153)	1.269 (1.853)	4.924 (3.074)
Works at SJO	-9.469*** (2.155)	-10.23** (3.384)	-9.525*** (2.298)	-9.539*** (2.163)	-5.057** (1.354)	-9.065*** (2.005)
Organizational Opportunity (Non-Ties)	0.554 (0.443)	0.829 (0.589)	0.559 (0.443)	0.570 (0.450)	0.195 (0.115)	0.328 (0.464)
Age (Centered)	-0.707 (0.815)	0.144 (2.686)	-0.618 (0.899)	-0.810 (0.814)	-0.944 (0.723)	-1.506 (0.995)
Age-Squared (Centered)	0.0200 (0.176)	-1.164* (0.545)	-0.0646 (0.180)	0.0441 (0.170)	-0.0417 (0.0974)	-0.0887 (0.125)
Hours of Sleep Per Night	-2.065 (1.379)	-4.170* (1.982)	-2.064 (1.342)	-2.103 (1.359)	-0.558 (0.434)	-1.399 (0.849)
Undergraduate Status*Bio Unavailability						
Undergraduate Status*Female			-0.218 (0.110)			
Grad. Student* Female				-0.355 (3.843)		
				2.908 (5.575)		
Biographical Unavailability* Female				0.0189 (0.0950)		

Constant	13.54 (9.681)	-35.01** (13.15)	11.21 (9.712)	14.10 (8.957)	2.856 (4.277)	10.63 (7.725)
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Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table B2. Three Different Tests for Nonlinear Effects of Biographical Availability

	Squared	Squared, No Linear	Squared and Cubed
Undergraduate Status	7.575* (2.623)	7.890* (2.688)	7.555* (2.615)
Graduate Student Status	-3.867 (2.851)	-3.807 (3.007)	-3.929 (2.878)
Biographical Unavailability	-0.481 (0.306)		-0.428 (0.364)
Biographical Unavailability (Squared)	0.00315 (0.00217)	-0.00152 (0.000941)	0.00188 (0.00513)
Biographical Unavailability (Cubed)			8.32e-06 (2.91e-05)
Social Support for Activism	3.335 (1.617)	3.322 (1.740)	3.347 (1.621)
Organizational Opportunity (Ties)	0.815** (0.273)	0.798* (0.271)	0.816** (0.272)
Face-to-Face Percent	1.194 (4.549)	1.644 (4.099)	1.208 (4.539)
Works at SJO	-9.197*** (1.820)	-9.748** (2.496)	-9.187*** (1.842)
Organizational Opportunity (Non-Ties)	0.563 (0.451)	0.531 (0.440)	0.564 (0.451)
Age (Centered)	-0.748 (0.818)	-0.602 (0.770)	-0.725 (0.825)
Age-Squared (Centered)	0.0294 (0.168)	0.0232 (0.178)	0.0237 (0.163)
Hours of Sleep Per Night	-1.951 (1.311)	-1.962 (1.312)	-1.961 (1.307)
Intercept	18.13 (12.62)	7.475 (6.296)	17.66 (12.81)

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05