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# Activism as a pathway to global citizenship<sup>☆</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

We examined the influence of prior work with activist issues on the antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. Participants rated their engagement with activist issues and measures related to global citizenship identification antecedents and outcomes. The results showed that engagement with activist issues predicted global citizenship through the perceptions of one's normative environment and global awareness. Activism also indirectly predicted prosocial values and behaviors related to global citizen identity through antecedents and global citizenship identification. The results highlight the prosocial outcomes of participation in activist movements.

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## 1. Introduction

Global citizenship is defined as global awareness, caring, embracing cultural diversity, promoting social justice and sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act (Reysen, Larey, & Katzarska-Miller, 2012). The notion of global citizenship has been widely discussed outside of psychology (e.g., Oxley & Morris, 2013; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013a; Schattle, 2008), however recent research within psychology has begun to explore the values related to a global citizenship identity (e.g., Jenkins, Reysen, & Katzarska-Miller, 2012; Katzarska-Miller, Reysen, Kamble, & Vithoji, 2012; Snider, Reysen, & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013b) tested a model showing that the perception that one's social network values and prescribes the identity (i.e., normative environment) and perception of one's knowledge and interconnectedness with others in the world (i.e., global awareness) predict

identification with global citizens. Following a social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), identification with global citizens then predicts adherence to the group content (e.g., norms, values, behaviors). Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013b) found that global citizenship identification predicted six clusters of values, including *intergroup empathy* (felt connection to individuals outside one's ingroup), *valuing diversity* (positive view of cultural diversity), *social justice* (endorsement of human rights and equality), *environmental sustainability* (concern for the natural environment), *intergroup helping* (desire to help others outside one's ingroup), and a *felt responsibility to act* for the betterment of the world. In the present research we examine whether prior activist work influences Reysen and Katzarska-Miller's (2013b) model of antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification.

The majority of research within social psychology has tended to focus on what predicts people joining social movements and engaging in collective action (van Zomeren, 2013). In the present research we will focus on outcomes of participation in activist movements, an area of research with little research (Thomas & Louis, 2013).

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Schattle (2005) found in a series of interviews that activists began to think of themselves as global citizens through engagement in activist work. In other words, activism can represent an antecedent or pathway to viewing the self as a global citizen (Schattle, 2008). Programs such as international volunteering (Smith & Laurie, 2011), service learning (Battistoni, Longo, & Jayanandhan, 2009), and volunteer tourism (Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012) are suggested to engender a global citizen identity in participants. Indeed, recent research shows that study abroad and service learning activities influence students to take a more global perspective (Engberg, 2013). Aid organizations have also been found to promote a global citizen identity to engender a felt responsibility to help (Desforges, 2004; Desforges, Jones, & Woods, 2005). Furthermore, activists are perceived to be global citizens. For example, after an accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor, an activist group was formed by members of prior activist movements and described by the researchers as cosmopolitans (Cable, Walsh, & Warland, 1998). In research examining cross-movement networking of activists, Carroll and Ratner (1996) also drew upon the category term of cosmopolitans to describe activists participating in multiple social movements. These descriptions suggest that individuals with prior activist experiences display values much in line with those of global citizens. Thus, there are multiple lines of research and theory to suggest that engaging in activist work can lead to viewing the self as a global citizen.

Engaging in activist behaviors may influence individuals' degree of global citizenship identification through their normative environment and global awareness. One's social network is an important predictor of whether one participates in a social movement (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). The perception that one's friends and family would be supportive of participation in an activist organization predicts intention to engage in collective action (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002; Fielding, McDonald, & Louis, 2008). At a macro level, research examining what factors predict membership in human rights organizations shows that individuals' normative environment (i.e., countries that are connected to the larger global society) advances individuals' awareness of social issues and increases the likelihood to join an international human rights movement (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). In effect, prior research examining the country level and individual level environments in which people are embedded suggest that their environment (family, friends, country) impact whether they join and participate in social movements.

Once engaged in an activist movement, individuals are likely to join other similar movements and create a normative environment that reflects global citizen values. Sherkat and Blocker (1997) compared values of individuals that participated in activist movements to those who did not. Prior activists (vs. non-activists) were found to hold more liberal political orientation and less traditional religious orientations. Both liberal political orientation and quest (less traditional) religious orientation are related to global citizenship identification (Katzarska-Miller, Barnsley, & Reysen, 2014). Activists are found to participate in multiple organizations and groups may work together for larger superordinate goals (see Bettencourt,

1996). Activist movements can create an environment that socializes individuals toward commitment to multiple issues beyond the initial issue for which the activist joined (see Bernstein, 2005). Furthermore, activist organizations engender ingroup identification and provide social support for like-minded individuals to sustain the group (Bettencourt, Dillmann, & Wollman, 1996). Indeed, research shows that identification with activists has long been recognized as a strong predictor of collective action behaviors (Hornsey et al., 2006). Beyond engendering identification with activists and widening the scope of one's activist concerns, participation in activist movements may also influence one's global awareness.

Activist organizations are increasingly taking a larger, more global, perspective (Smith, 2002). Thus, participation in such groups exposes individuals to issues happening in other areas of the world. For example, Bettencourt et al. (1996) surveyed members of a peace organization and found that the group sought to provide educational events to the community and members' learning opportunities. The messages promoted by activist organizations often focus on fighting injustice (Carroll & Ratner, 1996; Klandermans, 2004). Social justice is also a part of the prototypical group content of a global citizen identity (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013b). Furthermore, social movements highlight peoples' interconnectedness with one another through messaging and a focus on the collective good (Klandermans, 2004). Together, prior research suggests that participation in activist movements raises individuals' global awareness.

The purpose of the present research is to examine the influence of prior activist work on the antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. Building upon Schattle's (2008) observation that activist work engenders a global citizen identity, participants reported their degree of engagement with activist issues and a measure of antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship. We predict that greater activist engagement will predict greater global citizenship identification through participants' perceived normative environment and global awareness. Activism is further predicted to indirectly influence prosocial values (e.g., social justice, intergroup empathy) through the antecedents and global citizenship identification. Lastly, we expect to replicate Reysen and Katzarska-Miller's (2013b) model of antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification.

## 2. Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 is to test a model of activism predicting antecedents, identification, and outcomes of global citizenship.

### 2.1. Method

#### 2.1.1. Participants and procedure

Participants ( $N = 563$ , 73.2% women;  $M_{\text{age}} = 23.03$ ,  $SD = 7.60$ ) included undergraduate students participating for partial course credit or extra credit in a psychology class at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Participants indicated their ethnic/racial category as White (48.7%), African Amer-

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