MOTIVATORS FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE RELATED ACTIVISM AND POLICY ACTION IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

In the current political climate, anti-transgender and gender diverse (TGD) legislation is introduced and enacted into law across the United States each year. Yet, activism and policy action related to TGD issues are under studied. The aim of this dissertation was to identify the prevalence of TGD related activism and TGD policy action and explore four motivators (i.e., political salience, community connectedness, social movement organization involvement, and political efficacy) that influence participation in general activism and policy action and TGD activism and TGD policy action. Extant literature exploring activism and policy action does not consider TGD or cisgender individuals's motivations for participating in specifically TGD activism or TGD policy action.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 of the study, a cross-sectional survey (N = 954), found participants were more likely to participate in TGD activism compared to TGD policy action. Further, TGD participants were more likely to participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action compared to cisgender participants. When it comes to previous motivators identified in the broader activism and policy action literature, this study confirmed that political salience, community connectedness, and social movement organization involvement are correlated with TGD activism and social TGD policy action. However, structural equation modeling found the relationship between motivators and TGD activism was influenced by gender. For TGD activism, social movement organization involvement was a motivator across transgender, nonbinary, and cisgender participants; community connectedness was a motivator for nonbinary and cisgender participants; and political salience was a motivator for cisgender participants. For TGD policy action, social

movement organization involvement was the only motivator prevalent across transgender, nonbinary, and cisgender participants.

In Phase 2 of this study, focus groups (n = 5) and an interview (n = 1) with a total of 22 individuals were conducted to explain and provide context for the Phase 1 results. In Phase 2, five themes were identified that provide guidance for interpreting the results from Phase 1: (a) gender impacts access and safety for participation—gender is nuanced and complex among TGD individuals and multiple marginalized identities may influence participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action; (b) skin in the game—regardless of gender, individuals who participate in TGD activism and/or TGD policy action do so because of a perceived direct threat based on a personal connection to TGD justice whether through their own identity or relationships with TGD individuals; (c) performative allyship is not enough—the various activities and behaviors that range from low-risk and low-cost to high-risk and high-cost an individual must consider prior to engaging in TGD activism and/or TGD policy action; (d) barriers to policy action—the complexity and disillusionment with the current political system; and (e) social movement organizations reduce barriers—the ways social movement organizations bridge the gap in civic education and engagement.

The findings from this dissertation provide insight on who participates and what motivates those individuals to participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action. This knowledge can guide strategies and initiatives for community mobilization and organizing that engage individuals to participate across a spectrum of activities that support, defend, and advance TGD justice.

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Love as the practice of freedom.

—bell hooks

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Activism and policy action are important activities that every individual can participate in to support and improve their community so all members may thrive. Much of the gains in policy protections over the past decade for transgender and gender diverse (TGD) individuals at federal, state, and local levels were dependent upon participation in various forms of activism and policy action undertaken by TGD individuals and allies to raise awareness through story-telling, lobbying decision-makers, providing testimony at governmental hearings, and electing pro-TGD policy-makers (Arnold-Reinicker et al., 2020; Hill & Renn, 2021; Stryker, 2017). Literature suggests an anti-TGD political climate can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of TGD individuals, specifically when these laws and policies target their safety to live their daily lives (Horne et al., 2022; Hughto et al., 2021; Meyer, 2003; Paceley et al., 2017, 2020). For example, Hughto et al. (2021) found, among TGD adults, those who expressed concern about anti-TGD laws that had recently passed had a higher likelihood of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Additionally, TGD youth who perceive their community climate as supportive were less likely to report being depressed or anxious compared to TGD youth who perceive their community climate as hostile or intolerant (Paceley et al., 2020). The fragility of TGD justice in the United States today makes it imperative that individuals take action to sustain and advance progress that provides TGD individuals the opportunity to live safely and freely.

Participation in activism and policy action can be a buffer to the negative mental health impacts of the vitriolic political climate against TGD individuals. Literature suggests activism and policy action can improve an individual's confidence, self-efficacy, and may lead to positive mental health outcomes, such as feelings of empowerment, among both cisgender and LGBTQ+ individuals (Chan & Mak, 2020), as well as enhanced life satisfaction and positive affect in a

national sample of adults and another of college students (Klar & Kasser, 2009). This suggests activism can possibly offset negative mental health impacts of the current political climate. However, the literature does not examine the range or spectrum of participation in TGD activism and often excludes TGD policy action. Exploring whether extant known motivators for engagement in general activism apply to and can explain TGD activism and TGD policy action participation will contribute to the growing literature of general civic engagement and TGD civic engagement. Better understanding of motivators for TGD activism and TGD policy action will provide actionable guidance for enhancing participation of cisgender and TGD individuals across a broad spectrum of civic activities to improve individual and collective health, wellness, and political efficacy through multilevel policy change.

Historical Context of TGD Activism and Policy Action

The movement for transgender and gender diverse (TGD) justice in the United States has been in existence since the conception of the country (Stryker, 2017). TGD people have always existed across time and civilizations, and the United States is no exception (Feinberg, 1996). Moreover, the civil rights and lives of TGD people have also been challenged across time. For example, anti-TGD policies in the United States that specifically outlawed wearing clothing of the opposite sex date back in historical documents as early as colonial times (Stryker, 2017). Resistance or pushback toward these policies date back just as long ago (Feinberg, 1996; Stryker, 2017). There have been unprecedented TGD justice victories, progress, and visibility for TGD citizens in the United States in the past decade (Mendoza, 2017; Stryker, 2017). However, this progress has been stalled with the emergence of an anti-TGD counter movement as the TGD justice movement reaches a pivotal period in U.S. history (Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 2019).

Due to limitations in government Census data gathering, the actual size of the TGD population in the United States is unknown. Additionally, due to poorly or variously worded questions regarding gender and gender identity on many large-scale surveys that do attempt to collect this information, it is likely many available estimates are low as they fail to capture the identities of nonbinary and gender-diverse people (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). In a meta-regression of population-based surveys, Meerwijk and Sevelius (2017) estimated approximately 0.39% of the population (or one out of every 250 people) is TGD. The Williams Institute estimated about 0.6% of adults and 0.7% of youth identify as TGD, noting those between the ages of 13–17 have the highest rate of TGD identification among all generations (Herman et al., 2022). The 2017 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found almost 2% of young people between the ages of 14–18 are TGD, reinforcing the trend that younger generations continue to have higher rates of TGD identification compared to older generations (Johns et al., 2019). Although there is no universally accepted estimate of the TGD population size, TGD visibility is increasing and, with that, there are consistent increases in the estimated numbers of TGD people living in the United States.

In the United States, there is a robust history of laws and policies progressing and regressing TGD justice. However, the sheer quantity and frequency of anti-TGD legislation in recent years, as well as the dismantling of Obama-era protections during the Trump era (that have been reinstated by the Biden administration), demonstrate just how delicate and fragile access to nondiscrimination protections can be for TGD individuals (K. E. Baker, 2017; Castle, 2019; Hughto et al., 2021; Stryker, 2017). The strategy of the current anti-TGD countermovement seems to be focusing efforts to undo the many gains for TGD rights in the United States by targeting state legislatures and school boards. There is currently an

unprecedented amount of anti-TGD legislation being created, debated, and passed at local, state, and national levels. In 2022 alone, hundreds of anti-TGD bills were introduced in 31 states (Freedom for All Americans, 2022). Many of these bills target TGD youth, with legislation focusing on banning TGD youth from sports and gender-affirming care, criminalizing supportive and gender-affirming parents, and criminalizing health care providers working with TGD youth.

J. D. McCarthy and Zald (1977) posited, as social movements emerge, gain momentum, and become mainstream, as seen with the TGD justice movement, countermovements will also emerge in opposition to social and cultural progress—the double-edged sword of successful social movements. Stryker (2017) noted the mainstreaming of TGD politics began in the Obama era through initiatives targeting various levels of community and political engagement and change. These efforts were targeted toward the local level (e.g., schools with safe schools initiatives), health care institutions (as with the Affordable Care Act), and throughout the legal system (evidenced through landmark court cases protecting TGD civil rights; Kattari et al., 2020; Stryker, 2017). Much of this progress can be attributed to the work of TGD community leaders and allies (Hill & Renn, 2021). This points to the necessity of continuing civic engagement activity at local, state, and federal levels to protect TGD justice gains, as well as to continue to strive toward bending the arc of equity and justice for TGD individuals. However, there is limited extant research on civic engagement around TGD issues. Further, various modalities of civic engagement have been conceptualized in contrasting ways in the existing broader literature. A consequence of this is there is no one universal definition of civic engagement in the United States. For this reason, my dissertation focused primarily on the aspects of direct political participation that can be considered activism and policy action. This includes activities like

collective action, political involvement, and social change that will be further defined in the next section (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Putnam, 2001).

Terms and Definitions

Civic Engagement

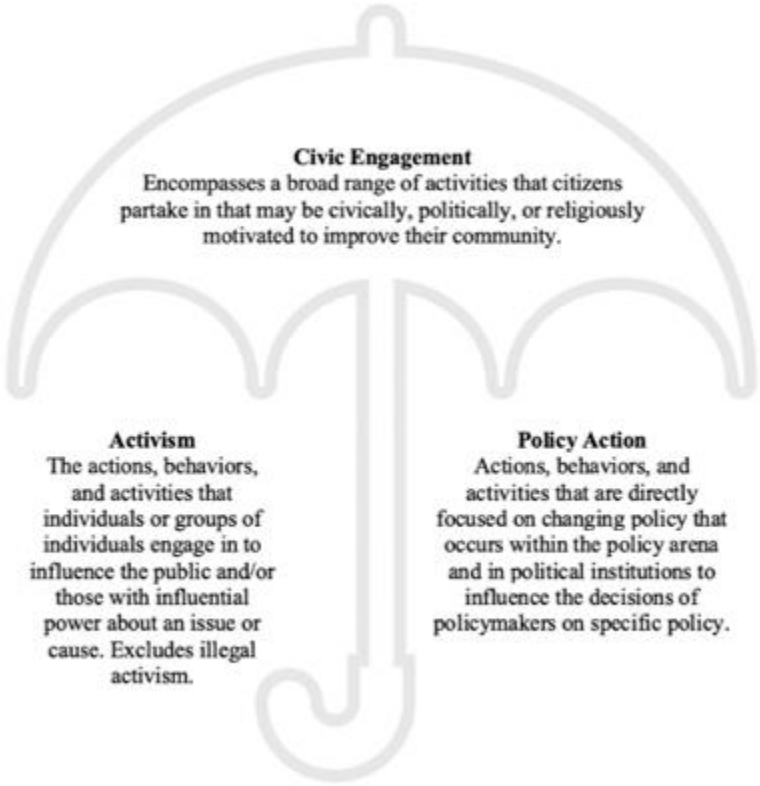
Adler and Goggin (2005) defined *civic engagement* as "the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community to improve conditions for others to help shape the community's future" (p. 236). Civic engagement involves a variety of modalities such as community service or volunteerism, collective action, political involvement, and social change that shape community change at multiple levels of influence, from a neighborhood to across the globe (Adler & Goggin, 2005). For many scholars, civic engagement encompasses a range of activities that citizens partake in that may be civically, politically, or religiously motivated (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Berger, 2009; Putnam, 2001). Adler and Goggin's (2005) broad definition of civic engagement is highly debated in the literature.

Berger (2009) referred to the concept of *civic engagement* as the "kitchen sink" of social, moral, and political engagement (p. 335). Some scholars, like Berger, argued using one term to capture the nuance across various forms of civic engagement is problematic and more precise language is necessary, particularly to operationalize variables in research (Berger, 2009; Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Ekman and Amnå (2012) developed a typology of political participation (see Figure 1) that describes a spectrum of engagement to begin a discussion that compartmentalizes these varying components of what broader literature defines as civic engagement. They identify political participation as either *latent* (i.e., indirect or passive activities) or *manifest* (i.e., direct activities). The highest manifest levels are formal political action and activism. Activism is further divided into legal or illegal activities. (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). According to this

typology, civic engagement is a latent form of political participation, or considered informal or prepolitical participation. For this dissertation, civic engagement is being used as an umbrella term that encompasses both activism and policy action. Please see Figure 1 for an illustration of this conceptualization.

Figure 1

Civic Engagement as an Umbrella Term Encompassing Activism and Policy Action



Activism

Similar to civic engagement, *activism* also has a spectrum of activities. However, *activism* has been much more succinctly examined in the literature. According to Ekman and Amnå (2012), activism includes actions that take place outside of political institutions (e.g., a state legislature) yet are usually focused on influencing political institutions or those with

influential political power. This may include legal or low-risk activities such as protests, demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, or involvement with social movement organizations (Corning & Myers, 2002; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; McAdam, 1986; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Activism may also include illegal or high-risk activities (e.g., violent protests or riots, purposely defacing property (e.g., throwing paint on a fur coat), setting animals free who are being used in laboratories, blocking traffic, or other forms of civil disobedience that may lead to arrest or injuries (Corning & Myers, 2002; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; McAdam, 1986). For the purpose of this dissertation, I built on Ekman and Amnå's (2012) conceptualization of civic engagement and legal activism to operationalize my definition of activism to capture both latent and manifest activities. This broad definition conceptualizes activism as the actions, behaviors, and activities that individuals or groups of individuals engage in to influence the public (and/or those with influential power) about an issue or cause (e.g., TGD justice) but not necessarily to change policy (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Corning & Myers, 2002; Ekman & Amnå, 2012). This includes activities such as attending a protest, donating to a social movement organization, or raising awareness about a social or political issue. This dissertation does not include illegal activism activities for a multitude of reasons, including the desire for results to be used to engage more individuals in activism and to protect study participants from disclosing previous illegal behavior.

This broader definition of activism allowed me to include another shift in the context of activism—the prevalence of social media activism—among my study variables. Social media has transformed the past decade; yet, is not aptly addressed in most existing research (e.g., Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Social media can be a powerful tool for mobilization (Reda et al., 2021; Robertson & Carroll, 2018; Zhou & Qiu, 2020). However, it can also be used for socially performative

gestures that contribute to political apathy (Cabrera et al., 2017). Most social media engagement around political issues are simple deeds that repost content or comments on existing posts that do little to address political realities. Cabrera et al. (2017) noted these activities are often referred to as *slacktivism* or *arm-chair activism.* Further, whether or not these types of no-cost and little-to-no-risk activities constitute activism is open to interpretation (Cabrera et al., 2017). As such, social media activism related to TGD issues will be explored in my dissertation study. This leads to a second crucial component this study will explore: policy action.

Policy Action

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term *policy action* is used to differentiate between *political action* and *political participation,* in which both these concepts may encompass broader activism behaviors. *Policy action* refers to political participation that is directly focused on policy-change efforts in the policy arena and in political institutions to influence the decisions of policymakers on specific policy. In the Ekman and Amnå (2012) political participation typology, formal political participation is interchangeable with policy action. However, *policy action* is used in this dissertation rather than *formal political participation* because activism in all its forms can be considered political. However, the intended goal of activism is not always policy change. Policy action encompasses activities such as writing to a policy-maker, lobbying or meeting with a policy-maker, running for office, and involvement with policy-focused advocacy organizations like a trade union, a political party, or a human rights organization (Corning & Myers, 2002; Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

Major Questions

This dissertation aimed to answer the following two overarching questions:

1. Why do individuals engage in different types of TGD activism and TGD policy action?
2. To what extent do existing theories and literature on motivators for participation in activism and policy action predict participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action?

To answer these questions, I conducted a study in two phases, beginning with a quantitative survey, followed by qualitative focus groups that provide deeper context understanding and interpreting quantitative results, known as an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The quantitative phase of the study addressed the following four questions: (a) Who participates in various types of TGD activism and TGD policy action? (b) Which previously identified civic engagement motivators (i.e., political salience, politicized collective identity, involvement with a social movement organization, and political efficacy) are associated with participating in TGD activism and TGD policy action? (c) What is the interconnection between civic engagement motivators to influence participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action? and (d) How does the presence of motivators for TGD activism and TGD policy action vary by gender?

The primary study hypotheses were as follows:

- H1: There will be a higher rate of participation in TGD activism compared to TGD policy action.
- H2: TGD individuals will be more likely to participate in both TGD activism and policy action compared to cisgender individuals.

- H3: Higher scores on motivators, overall, will link to a greater likelihood of participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action.
- H4: Compared to other motivators, political efficacy will have the strongest association with participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action.

The qualitative phase of the study answered the following question: How do participant narratives reveal connections and processes between TGD activism, TGD policy action, and the four motivators? This allowed for the opportunity to use qualitative data from Phase 2 to provide deeper context for interpreting and understanding the statistical outcomes from Phase 1 of the study. Finally, the research question that integrates the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was: How does the interview data from individuals who have participated in different types of TGD activism and policy action, and the survey data about the associations between motivators and TGD activism and policy action, combine to explain why and how individuals participate in different types of TGD activism and TGD policy action?

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation proposal is organized into five chapters. The first chapter offers a brief introduction, overview of the history of TGD justice and activism in the United States, and definitions for the following terms used frequently in this dissertation: civic engagement, activism, and policy action. Further the introduction raises questions about how and why individuals may participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action. The second chapter begins with an overview of two theoretical frameworks that undergird my dissertation: (a) the social identity model of collective action and (b) mobilization and participation theory. These theories provide conceptualizations of identity development, mobilization, and social-psychological influences for TGD activism and TGD policy action behaviors. In the second chapter, I also

review the civic engagement motivators literature that link empirical evidence to the theoretical frameworks and are organized by four civic engagement motivators: (a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, (c) social movement organizations, and (d) political efficacy. In the third chapter, I describe the study methods, including the design and analysis plan of Phase 1's cross-sectional survey and Phase 2's focus groups. Chapter 4 includes findings from both study phases. Finally, Chapter 5 offers a discussion and implications of the study's finding on TGD activism and TGD policy action followed by a note about study limitations.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE THEORY AND LITERATURE

Theoretical Frameworks

Social Identity Model of Collective Action

The social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) integrates the framework of politicized collective identity developed by Simon and Klandermans (2001) to conceptualize the predictors for engaging in collective action (one form of activism). *Collective action* is a term used to describe when a group of people come together to take action on an issue and is often what occurs for various activities and behaviors related to activism and policy action (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008, 2018). Van Zomeren et al. (2008, 2018) posited collective action can be predicted by the presence of four subjective perspectives of individuals: politicized collective identity, moral beliefs, injustice or group-based anger, and efficacy.

Politicized collective identities, as defined by Simon and Klandermans (2001), are "self-conscious group members in a power struggle on behalf of their group knowing that it is the wider, more inclusive societal context in which this struggle has to be fought out" (p. 329). The notion of a power struggle comes from the idea that our identities, or who we are, either come with or lack power. Some collective identities will have more power than others. A group with less power is likely to feel a concept known as *relative deprivation*. Relative deprivation is the anger and resentment an individual or group feels when they perceive themselves to be at an unfair and undeserved comparative disadvantage either socially, economically, or politically (Grasso et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2012). This perception of disadvantage leads to groups attempting to engage in a power struggle that may either shift or maintain the status-quo power dynamic. Simon and Klandermans (2001) pointed out this power dynamic is not only between and among the two "opposing" groups but is also reinforced by the larger societal context of the

general public. Group members in a politicized collective identity are intentionally, consciously, and explicitly engaging in this power struggle.

Van Zomeren et al. (2018) posited closely tied with a politicized collective identity is the concept of *moral beliefs*. Injustice in the SIMCA model can be understood as feelings of relative deprivation an individual experiences, similar to the expression of powerlessness felt by those with a politicized collective identity, who perceive themselves to have less power than the external group that does not share that identity (Grasso et al., 2019; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008). However, an important distinction in SIMCA is these feelings of relative deprivation bring about group-based anger and this emotional reaction to injustice can be a motivating factor for participating in collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2018). Moral beliefs, on the other hand, are an individual's moral conviction of what is perceived to be "right" or "wrong" (van Zomeren et al., 2018). These moral beliefs are extended to in-group members who are expected to be "reliable, trustworthy, sincere, and . . . moral" (van Zomeren et al., 2018, p. 129) based on whether group members are willing to take action on or not. Efficacy, in the context of SIMCA, is described by van Zomeren et al. (2018) as the "shared belief that one's group can resolve its grievance through a unified effort" (p. 507), thus providing a sense of collective agency or power. This collective agency and power may be influenced by social movement organizations and gain credibility through formalized mobilization and participation efforts (Klandermans, 1984; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

For this dissertation, SIMCA was used to extrapolate the specific actions and behaviors that individuals participate in to influence transgender and gender diverse (TGD) justice. The SIMCA model may represent the belief that the world is unjust or unfair, particularly the components of politicized collective identity (as mentioned previously), the influence on moral

beliefs that provide a sense of right or wrong (and, arguably, justice and fairness), and group-based anger that is developed through the perception of experiencing injustice, oppression, and discrimination (Lipkus, 1991; van Zomeren et al., 2018). Further, moral beliefs may influence how an individual believes others should be treated and respected, leading a person to engage in TGD-inclusive behaviors (Kattari et al., 2018) and behaviors related to TGD activism and TGD policy action. Additionally, the group efficacy beliefs component of SIMCA indicates that there is belief that the political system works and will respond to collective efforts that align with the internal motivation of engaging in public service due to the desire to help the general public and belief in the policy-making process (Coursey & Pandey, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2018). This group efficacy belief can be demonstrated through the theoretical components of Klanderman's (1984) mobilization and participation theory.

Mobilization and Participation Theory

Although intrinsic motivations for engaging in activism and policy actions are important for identifying behaviors related to activism and policy action, there is also a need to incorporate extrinsic influences. Mobilization and participation theory (Klandermans, 1984) is an extension of resource mobilization theory (J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977) that integrates the social-psychological aspect of individual-level participation in social movements. Resource mobilization surmises that a social movement's primary goal is to shift individuals and organizations along an engagement continuum to maximize collective action through the mobilization of resources that can be offered to the movement (Klandermans, 1984; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977). Specifically, the focus of resource mobilization is on individuals who may not directly benefit from the movement goals, and are external to the movement, in hopes of moving these individuals from sympathetic supporters to resource providers in the form

of financial, social, or cultural capital (J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977). From this perspective, an individual's sympathy toward (or proximity to) a social movement issue may increase the likeliness of their recruitment into that movement by an organization to take on various civic engagement actions such as signing a petition, voting in a certain way, donating money, or attending a protest (Klandermans, 1984; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Klandermans (1984) posited an individual's ability to be both persuaded and activated into participation is influenced by a willingness to participate and the mobilization tactics executed by a social movement. An individual's willingness to participate will be influenced by their expectations that others will also participate, the probability of success, and the probability of success if many people participate, thus translating to the perceived impact for the collective good. However, willingness to participate will also be assessed by the costs and benefits of participation. For example, a TGD individual's willingness to provide testimony for a legislative committee hearing will be influenced by the perception of the risk associated with being out as a TGD person in that context, the likeliness the TGD individual feels like they will contribute to the collective good, the likeliness the TGD individuals feels others will participate, and the likeliness that testifying will influence the legislators' decision.

The aspect that influences an individual's participation is how they were persuaded or mobilized to engage in activism or policy action. Klandermans (1984) postulated there are two types of mobilization attempts: consensus and action. *Consensus mobilization* is the process a social movement undertakes to gain support for their mission or viewpoints. The effectiveness of consensus mobilization relies on communicating the collective good or impact of the movement by means of the strategy to confront their opponent(s) and successfully achieve their goal(s). *Action mobilization* is the methods through which the movement engages individuals to

participate. Although consensus mobilization is focused on messaging about why the movement is important and the impact it will have, action mobilization focuses on getting people actively involved in the movement. Consensus mobilization can stand on its own, however, it is also a precursor for active mobilization (Klandermans, 1984).

In more recent applications of mobilization and participation theory, consensus and action mobilization has been interchanged with Goffman's (1974) framing analysis. The framing approach purports a social movement organization will frame solutions to social issues in such a way that aligns with an individual's moral beliefs or their anger at injustice (Goffman, 1974; McEntire et al., 2015, 2017; Snow et al., 1986). This alignment process, or pathway to participation through framing, may also be referred to as micromobilization in modern day literature (Snow et al., 1986). However, there has yet to be a consensus among scholars on the precise definition of micromobilization (Isaac et al., 2020; Ward, 2016). In essence, social movements can create a politicized collective identity as a means to maintain mobilization momentum or politicized collective identity can create social movements as a means to mobilize power to create change (Curtin et al., 2010; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001). This closely aligns with the SIMCA and politicized collective identity theories in a multitude of ways, including the development of a politicized collective identity, strategies for harnessing moral beliefs and group-based anger into movement mobilization and participation, and influencing group efficacy beliefs to build agency and motivate individuals to take action (Klandermans, 1984; van Zomeren et al., 2018).

Social movements can also influence beliefs in justice and fairness as well as efficacy in the policy-making process (Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Klandermans, 1984; Lipkus, 1991). This dissertation used mobilization and participation theory to better understand how various TGD-

activism and TGD policy action behaviors may be influenced by the perspective of external influences such as social movements, organizations, and the participation of other individuals.

Both SIMCA and mobilization and participation theory influence each other and can be viewed together to understand various pathways toward specific TGD activism and TGD policy action behaviors and activities. Furthermore, these theories provide a foundation for this dissertation's approach to defining and measuring motivators of TGD activism and TGD policy action. Based on theory and literature, I conceptualize and operationalize constructs related to four motivators toward TGD activism and policy action: (a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, (c) social movement organization involvement, and (d) political efficacy for participating in TGD activism and TGD policy action. The SIMCA theoretical framework reflects internalized aspects the motivators of political salience (i.e., moral beliefs and injustice or group-based anger), community connectedness (i.e., injustice or group-based anger and politicized collective identity), and political efficacy (i.e., individual and group efficacy). The framework of mobilization and participation theory reflects the externalized aspects of the motivators of political salience, social movement organization involvement, and political efficacy. The motivators will be further discussed in the literature review.

Literature Review

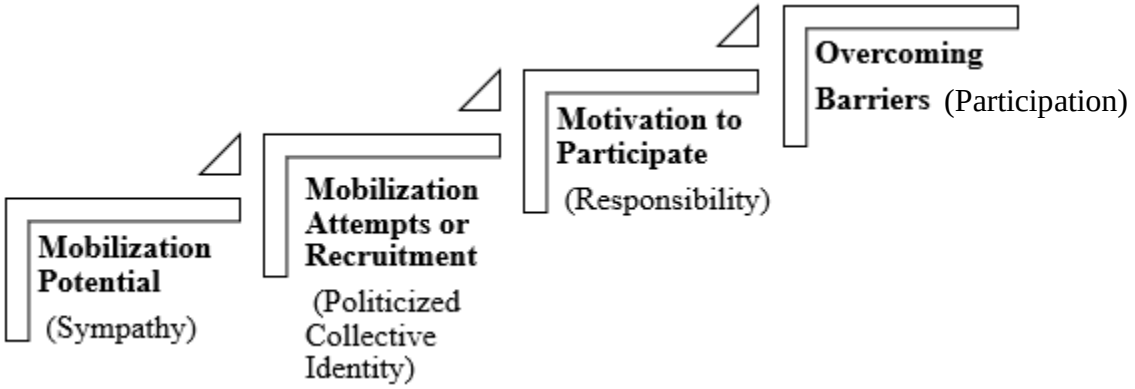
Conditions That Influence Activism Participation

Although not everyone who engages in various forms of activism and policy action will identify themselves as an activist, it is important to juxtapose the individuals taking action with the action itself. Klandermans and Oegema (1987) posited four conditions that influence participation in activism and policy action (see Figure 2). For participation to occur, first, an individual must have mobilization potential or sympathy for an issue. However, that potential

alone will not determine participation without some form of engagement or recruitment (Klandermans, 1984; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Personal and professional networks are both influential. However, personal relationships are the more effective recruitment tool (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Another key condition is motivation to participate, which usually involves assessing for risks and costs (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; McAdam, 1986). This motivation to participate will also influence the last of Klandermans and Oegema's conditions for participation—overcoming barriers. Curtin et al. (2010, 2016) streamlined Klandermans and Oegema (1987) conditions by positing three characteristics of activists (see parentheses in Figure 2) that motivate individuals to overcome barriers. These characteristics include (a) expressing sympathy toward an issue as a potential ally, (b) having a sense of political or social responsibility for an issue, and (c) having a *politicized collective identity* or a sense of "we-ness" based on a specific identity or social issue (Snow, 2001).

Figure 2

Conditions for Mobilization Overlayed With Activist Characteristics



An ethnographic study exploring individuals who opposed a road being built in London in the early 1990s found collective identity development as an activist is influenced by simply participating in one act of activism or policy action (Drury et al., 2003). This aligns with scholarship positing that a collective identity is a primary motivation for ongoing engagement in activism and policy action and vice versa (Curtin et al., 2010; Curtin & McGarty, 2016; Duncan, 1999, 2005; Duncan & Stewart, 2007; Klandermans, 1993; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987).

Participation in activism and policy action are not necessarily self-serving or based solely on self-interest or belonging to a collective identity. Curtin and McGarty (2016) classified activists into three types: (a) own-group, (b) other-group (e.g., ally activism), and (c) issue-based. Own-group activism is exemplified by a TGD person engaged in TGD activism. An example of ally activism is a cisgender person engaged in TGD activism. These two types of activism are focused on civil and human rights. Issue-based activism is not specifically focused on civil or human rights but, rather, a larger, intersectional issue that impacts all (e.g., environmental activism or healthcare reform activism).

Political Salience

The concept of issue-based activism may lead into the consideration of another key indicator for activist participation which is how one applies personal meaning to political events rather than specific groups or issues. This concept is known as *personal political salience* or PPS (Curtin et al., 2010; Duncan, 1999, 2005; Duncan & Stewart, 2007). Duncan (2005) defined PPS as "the propensity to internalize, as central to one's self-definition, engagement with political events, issues, or ideologies" (p. 966). PPS also posits the more politically aware a person is, the more likely they will develop a politicized collective identity and the more likely they are to participate in activism or policy action (Duncan & Stewart, 2007). Duncan and Stewart (2007)

found, in a study of 1,490 mid-life and activist women, that politicized gender collective identity was a mediator between PPS and women's rights activism, but not civil rights activism. However, politicized racial collective identity (in this case, as antiracist) was a mediator between PPS and women's rights activism and civil rights activism. This exemplifies the fact that not all politicized collective identities will lead to engagement in activism on all issues. An activist involved in one social movement may not be involved in other social movements. Additionally, the type of activism an individual gravitates toward (i.e., own-group, ally, or issue-based) may influence their extent of activism on a particular issue.

A qualitative content analysis (N = 1,360) found LGBTQ+ individuals described their desire to promote social justice was an important motivating factor for engaging in activism, which may explain why LGB individuals are more likely to engage in activism compared to heterosexual individuals (Montagno et al., 2021; Swank, 2018). LGBTQ+ individuals may have a higher political salience around various social justice issues. However, LGB individuals are not significantly more likely than heterosexual individuals to participate in activism related to racial justice or feminist issues (Swank, 2018), demonstrating inconsistencies across various LGBQ+ communities and the nuance of intersecting marginalized identities or those with multiple marginalized identities (Crenshaw, 1991) with political salience.

In Chan and Mak's (2020) study, *critical consciousness* (or understanding the existence and complexity) of LGBTQ+ oppression was found to be associated with intentions for collective action among LGBT individuals but not among cisgender heterosexual individuals. Contradicting this finding among cisgender allies, Parent and Silva (2018) found critical consciousness related to TGD oppression was associated with voting against an anti-TGD bathroom bill. These studies exploring cisgender individuals' propensity to engage in TGD

collective action provide inconsistent results for political salience predicting TGD activism and TGD policy action among cisgender allies (Chan & Mak, 2020; Parent & Silva, 2018).

An important distinction about PPS is it is not about the amount of political knowledge an individual holds but, rather, it is the empathy or caring about political events that may or may not directly affect that individual (Curtin et al., 2010; Duncan, 2005). This indicates many activists may be drawn to ally or issue-based activism and policy action because of a disposition that attaches personal meaning to political events. This may be applied to a parent, spouse, child, or colleague of a TGD individual who experiences PPS and who may be more likely to develop a collective identity based on their proximal role to that TGD individual and community. This collective identity may prompt them to be more likely to engage in activism and policy action due to the politicized nature of that identity.

Community Connectedness

Collective identity can be defined as a cognitive, moral, or emotional connection to (or shared experience with) a larger group of people (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Snow, 2001). Collective identity can encompass personal identity such as sexual orientation, gender, or religion and it can be rooted in social identities such as a social worker, activist, or parent. It can be further narrowed to collective identity among parents of TGD children (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Snow, 2001). The crux of collective identity is based on relationship building and community connectedness – whereas the focus for individual identity is on the "me" or the "I," collective identity is based on the group or the "we" and "us" aspect of group membership (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Some group members in a collective identity may develop a politicized collective identity.

There are three “critical ingredients” that manifest the process of a politicized collective identity. First, there is an awareness of shared grievances (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). For example those who relate to a TGD politicized collective identity will recognize that the TGD community experiences bias, stigma, and discrimination across multiple domains of their daily lives—such as in familial relationships, employment, health care, and policy-creation (Hughto et al., 2021). The second ingredient is adversarial attributions or identifying an external opponent. This enemy blamed for the injustices experienced by group members can be the out-group, an authority such as the government, the system itself, or mix of all three. The pivotal aspect of adversarial attributions is the “us versus them” mentality (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). For example, the opponent of TGD justice in Texas, after the implementation of the state attorney general’s 2022 declaration criminalizing parents who affirm their TGD children, is the governor, attorney general, and the Texas child welfare system (Torchinsky, 2022). The third ingredient is the involvement of society through triangulation or forcing the general public to engage in the conflict or take sides through escalation of the conflict. Referring to the Texas example, the governmental leaders (out-group) in the state and the TGD community (in-group) are in a power struggle that has national attention, with both sides engaging the general public in discourse and action to influence momentum for their group’s benefit.

Considering the three ingredients for a politicized collective identity: shared grievances, adversarial attributions, and societal triangulation, those who have developed a politicized collective identity are less likely to view society as fair or just. The less fair or just one perceives the world around them, the more likely they are motivated to change the conditions that create unjust or unequal circumstances (Lipkus, 1991; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). For example, Swank (2018) found, in the 2012 sample of the American National Election Study, LGB

individuals were significantly more likely than heterosexual individuals to participate in activism related to LGB issues, peace issues, environmental justice issues, and Occupy Wall Street. However, LGB individuals were not significantly more likely than heterosexual individuals to participate in activism related to racial justice or feminist issues (Swank, 2018), demonstrating inconsistencies across various LGBQ+ communities and the nuance of intersecting marginalized identities or those with multiple marginalized identities such as having to navigate both homophobia and racism (Crenshaw, 1991). This can be explained through study of LGB racial/ethnic minorities. One study found LGB sociopolitical involvement was correlated with perceiving racism in the LGB community and the level of outness of an individual. However, racial/ethnic sociopolitical involvement was correlated with only the perception of racism in the LGB community demonstrating the complexity that may exist for individual decisions for participating in various forms of civic engagement, particularly among multiply marginalized LGBQ+ individuals (VanDaalen & Santos, 2017).

Another study found White LGB individuals were more likely than Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) LGB individuals to participate in protests about gay or lesbian rights, but does not account for other types of protests or activism (Swank & Fahs, 2016). This may be due to the inherently higher risk of engaging in activism for BIPOC individuals compared to White individuals due to the ongoing threat of police brutality in the United States (Lett et al., 2021). Collective and individual identity seem to influence LGBQ+ individuals, particularly BIPOC LGBQ+ individuals', likeliness to participate in various forms of activism and policy action. This complements the social identity model of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2018), positing the influence that in-group anger and group efficacy have on collective action (Montagno et al., 2021; Pender et al., 2019; Santos & VanDaalen, 2018).

One study of 5,860 young people from across the United States suggested cisgender youth were less likely to engage in activism, advocate on various justice issues, and engage with community-based organizations compared to TGD youth (Frost et al., 2019). This suggests TGD youth are more likely to participate in a spectrum of activism and policy action compared to their cisgender peers. TGD individuals may report activism and policy action at higher levels than cisgender individuals due to their politicized collective identity that is developed by ongoing and consistent experiences of bias, stigma, and discrimination. A study of 552 TGD adults reported a small correlation between participating in collective action, experiencing discrimination, and having internalized transphobia, suggesting that experiencing minority stress may influence participation in activism and policy action (Breslow et al., 2015). Sexual minority stress posits that external or internal anti-LGBQ beliefs and experiences, such as discrimination or stigma, will negatively affect an LGBQ+ individual's health and wellbeing (Meyer, 2003). Transposed to TGD individuals, gender minority stress is the manifestation of negative health and wellness outcomes due the experiences of anti-TGD prejudice, transphobia, and oppression (Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Meyer, 2003). Due to these experiences, TGD individuals may feel at an unfair disadvantage (Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019) or may have developed a politicized collective identity from relative deprivation (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2018), motivating them to take action against anti-TGD oppression. Additionally, experiencing economic precarity and minority stress were predictors of activism among TGD youth (Frost et al., 2019).

A concept closely aligned with a politicized collective identity is community connectedness. The literature about predictors for LGBQ+ individuals' participation in activism and policy action discusses the importance of a sense of belonging to reduce isolation

experienced by individuals with marginalized identities. These isolating circumstances are often amplified by experiences of bias, stigma and discrimination (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Harris, 2009; Harris et al., 2013, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Montagno et al., 2021; Pender et al., 2019; Santos & VanDaalen, 2018; VanDaalen & Santos, 2017). Additionally, Putnam (2001) noted as civic engagement declined in the United States, so did a sense of belonging to one's community, postulating that these two concepts are intertwined. One study of LGB racial/ethnic minorities (N = 208) by Santos and VanDaalen (2018) found feeling a sense of connection to LGB communities weakly positively correlates with high-risk activism orientation for both LGB issues and race/ethnic issues. Further, feeling a sense of connection to racial/minority communities was moderately positively correlated with high risk activism orientation for race/ethnic issues (Santos & VanDaalen, 2018). These findings have continued to hold in studies exploring specific racial identities and LGBT sociopolitical involvement (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Harris & Battle, 2013). Among lesbian and bisexual Latinas, same-gender-loving Black women, and same-gender-loving Black men, feeling connected to the LGBT community was associated with LGBT sociopolitical involvement and BIPOC sociopolitical involvement (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Harris & Battle, 2013).

Individuals in marginalized communities like the LGBTQ+ community often seek out a sense of belonging. However, multiply marginalized LGBTQ+ individuals have to navigate intragroup marginalization, which is when dominant groups in the larger marginalized group further marginalize those who are not part of that dominant group (e.g., further marginalization of BIPOC LGBTQ+ individuals by White LGBTQ+ individuals, TGD individuals by cisgender LGBQ individuals, and disabled or neurodivergent LGBTQ+ individuals by temporarily able-bodied or neurotypical LGBTQ+ individuals; Harris, 2009).

The connection between a sense of belonging or community involvement continues to show up in literature focusing on BIPOC LGBQ+ individuals navigating intragroup marginalization through activism and policy action (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Harris et al., 2013, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Montagno et al., 2021; Pender et al., 2019; Santos & VanDaalen, 2018; VanDaalen & Santos, 2017). Feeling connected with the LGB community have continued to be a significant predictor of LGB POC sociopolitical involvement (e.g., addressing racism in the LGB community) by sexual minority Black women, Latinas, Latino men, and Asian/Pacific Islander women and men (Harris et al., 2013, 2015).

Similar to LGBQ+ individuals, a sense of belonging or community connectedness may influence a TGD individual's participation in activism and policy action (Billard, 2021; Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Singh et al., 2011). In Billard's (2021) secondary data analysis of the 2015 United States Transgender Survey (N = 23,802), those who indicated community connectedness were more likely to participate in civic engagement and financially contribute to a political campaign. This mirrors sentiments expressed in various qualitative studies with both White and BIPOC TGD youth and adults, suggesting that community connectedness is a motivator for activism participation (Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Singh et al., 2011; Singh & McKleroy, 2011).

A politicized collective identity may develop for cisgender allies based on their relationship to TGD individuals, which may be a unique motivator for TGD activism and TGD policy action. Despite their relative absence in the literature, cisgender parents play crucial roles in TGD advocacy and TGD policy change due to their relatable status as both parents and cisgender, which facilitates influencing policy-makers who share those identities (Meadow, 2018). Literature on cisgender parents' role in advocacy has identified a spectrum of support that

begins with acceptance and affirmation of a child (Neary, 2021), prompted by perspective transformation in understanding gender in new ways (McNeilly, 2021). The next phase is advocacy on behalf of one's TGD child (e.g., in schools or in parental professional context; Manning et al., 2015; Neary, 2021). An autoethnographic study of five academic (tenured university faculty) parents of TGD children in Canada explored this advocacy, which included filing civil rights complaints for school policy, providing public comment at local school board meetings, and hosting support groups and educational workshops (Manning et al., 2015). One parent noted her previous activism in feminist politics gave her the foundation to develop a coalition to mobilize support for changing school policy to be affirming of TGD students, including her own. Similarly, in another qualitative study of 12 middle-class parents of TGD children in Ireland, advocacy efforts were focused on local school policy, starting with discussions with teachers and then evolving to broader building-level policy change (Neary, 2021). In both studies, parents generally had socioeconomic privilege and access to financial and social capital to navigate and address the transphobia their children experienced (Manning et al., 2015; Neary, 2021).

One qualitative study explored the experiences of self-identified "parent-advocates" who felt they were advocates not only for their TGD child, but for all TGD children. Among the eight participants in the study, half had previous broader activism experience and half did not. However, all noted having a TGD child prompted their participation in TGD activism (Schlehofer et al., 2021). In this study, advocacy involved four components: (a) affirmation of their child's gender, (b) social media advocacy, (c) involvement with LGBTQ+ organizations (such as PFLAG and GLSEN), and (d) workplace advocacy. Work-place advocacy also emerged

in Manning et al.'s (2015) autoethnography, with parents in both studies using their privilege in their professional roles to advance TGD justice.

At all levels of advocacy, parents tend to be motivated mostly by concern for ensuring the safety of their TGD child. It could be argued parents of TGD children develop their own politicized collective identity and rely on community connectedness. For many parents, they find their voice in broader activism and policy through their connections to each other and also formal LGBTQ+ organizations (Schlehofer et al., 2021). These social movement organizations may be the catalyst for parents moving from advocacy solely for their own TGD child, to becoming an advocate for TGD children more broadly.

Social Movement Organization Involvement

Resource mobilization theory asserts a social movement organization's primary goal is to shift individuals and organizations along an engagement continuum to maximize collective action through the mobilization of resources that can be offered to the movement (Dennis, 2016; Jenkins, 1983; McAdam, 1982; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977; Pichardo, 1988). These organizations may provide various opportunities for civic engagement actions such as volunteering, signing a petition, voting in a certain way, donating money, or educating others (Klandermans, 1984; McAdam, 1982; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Pichardo, 1988).

Activism and policy action among TGD individuals may stem from participation and mobilization in social movement organizations, demonstrated by TGD youth being more likely to engage with community organizations (Frost et al., 2019) or belonging to a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or a similar student organization at their high school or university (Singh, 2013). A mixed-methods study of TGD young people (ages 18–29) found a large majority participate in civic engagement in some capacity (e.g., volunteering at an event, involvement in a social media

campaign, or collecting signatures for a petition). These are all examples of working with existing social movement organizations as a means of participation and mobilization (Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Klandermans, 1984; J. D. McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

In a study of Black LGBTQ+ young people ages 14–29 (N = 142), researchers found those who volunteer are more likely to engage in low-risk Black-community-related activism and high-risk Black-community-related activism, and Black-community-related political activism compared to nonvolunteers (Pender et al., 2019). This suggests engaging in latent civic engagement activities (e.g., volunteering) may predict future participation in manifest activities (e.g., activism). Future political activism may be predicted by past political activism participation and frequency of volunteering in the past month among multiply marginalized LGBTQ+ individuals (Montagno et al., 2021; Pender et al., 2019). The consistency of previous participation in volunteering and other forms of civic engagement, where there is a high likeliness of meeting and interacting with others who share your identity, may have an positive influence on future activism and policy action (Pender et al., 2019).

This accumulating effect of participation in activism is captured in an autoethnographic account of the life a trans woman, Vásquez (2015). Vásquez spoke to her initial involvement in social movement organizations as a volunteer because she was the Miss Gay Latina pageant winner in the early 1990s. Volunteering turned into a formalized community organizer position with a nonprofit AIDS prevention organization at the peak of the AIDS epidemic in the United States (Vázquez, 2015). This led her to do more collective action work throughout her life. Another example of participation and mobilization is demonstrated in a qualitative study with 13 BIPOC TGD youth from the Southern United States. TGD youth participation in local GSAs led

many to participate in advocacy for gender-affirming restrooms or housing at their schools and universities (Singh, 2013).

These experiences exemplify how individuals may move across the activism and policy action spectrum and the role social movement organizations play in influencing this movement (Frost et al., 2019; Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Schlehofer et al., 2021; Singh, 2013; Vázquez, 2015). As one continues to participate in various ways in activism and policy action, they are likely to build their political efficacy and, in-turn, continue to participate in activism and policy action (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982; Morrell, 2005).

Political Efficacy

Political efficacy can be defined as an individual's belief that they can influence the political process by being active participants in it (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982; Groskurth et al., 2021; Morrell, 2005). There are two forms of political efficacy: internal and external. *Internal political efficacy* is an individual's perceived political competence (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982; Morrell, 2005). In other words, someone with high internal political efficacy believes themselves to be a capable change maker or influencer in the political process. Someone with low internal political efficacy, on the other hand, will not believe they can make a difference in the political process due to their incompetence or the complexity of the system. *External political efficacy* is the perception that the political system works in a democratic way; therefore, individuals with high external political efficacy will demonstrate political trust, whereas individuals with low external political efficacy will demonstrate a sense of cynicism about the political system (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982). Internal and external political efficacy work together.

A unique motivator in the qualitative literature focusing on TGD individuals' participation in activism and policy action is a sense of optimism or hope for the future that

inspires TGD individuals to take action (Bockting et al., 2019; Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Singh et al., 2011; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). In other words, these TGD individuals perceive that their participation in the political process can be influential in moving it toward TGD justice. Bockting et al.'s (2019) qualitative study of 19 TGD participants found that they participated in civic engagement because of their hope and optimism for the future. Gandy-Guedes and Paceley (2019) found TGD youth participate in activism and policy action because, through these activities, they can help other queer and trans youth they know and make their local community an affirming place for future queer and trans youth. White TGD adults and BIPOC TGD adults also use activism as a means to foster hope for the future, demonstrating both internal political efficacy in their participation and external political efficacy, beliving change can occur (Singh et al., 2011; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). Further, activism and policy action was a means of empowerment during the tumultuous time of the Trump administration (Bockting et al., 2019). The hostile political environment may have led to TGD individuals perceiving the imminent loss of their rights; yet, participating in activism and policy action was a means to create community with other TGD individuals to foster hope and actively build a better future. In this sense, empowerment and political efficacy go hand-in-hand, as it is likely that as an individual continues to participate in activism or policy action, they are likely going to increase their political efficacy and self-confidence in their skills (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982). For some TGD individuals, having a sense of hope and that change can occur, paired with personal and/or collective agency to create change, despite the awareness of anti-TGD oppression, translated to their participation in activism or policy action (Bockting et al., 2019).

When examined together, political salience, community connectedness, social movement organization involvement, and political efficacy are all motivators for participation in activism

and policy action, yet these concepts are distinct and interconnected. This dissertation uses the frameworks of the social identity model for collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008, 2018) and mobilization and participation theory (Klandermans, 1984) for understanding the interconnectedness of motivators for participation in general activism and policy action. Details about the connection between theory and existing literature are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Connection Between Theory and Literature

Theories	Theory components	Theory connection to motivators from literature
Social identity model of collective action (SIMCA)	Politicized collective identity (PCI)	Community connectedness or sense of belonging often leads to a politicized collective identity, especially among marginalized identities. Having a marginalized identity (regardless of a PCI) can cause an individual to experience anger toward the injustice they experience. Seeing other people you know and trust care about an issue will likely influence you to, too. MPT can contribute to building community connectedness.
	Anger at injustice Moral beliefs	Political salience is the empathy and moral beliefs an individual has toward social issues. A person with strong moral beliefs about an issue may also experience anger toward injustice around that issue.
	Group and political efficacy	Political efficacy or the belief in that community and political change can occur through a person's active participation. This concept is central to both SIMCA and MPT. If you do not believe change will occur, you are less likely to participate in attempting to create change. Seeing other people you know and trust take action on an issue will likely influence you to, too.
Mobilization and participation theory (MPT)	Action mobilization (SMO engaging individuals to participate) Consensus mobilization (SMO raising awareness	Social movement organization involvement or an engagement with an SMO or a person who is active with an SMO leads to individuals participating on a social issue. Social movement organization involvement has been sown to both raise awareness about social issues and to mobilize people to take action on the issue as conceptualized by MPT. Seeing other people you know and trust care about an issue will likely influence you to, too.

Although each motivator may stand on its own, they are likely interconnected and multiple motivators may predict an individual's propensity for engaging in TGD activism and TGD policy action. However, extant literature does not explore this interconnection or which

motivation may be the strongest. Nor have these motivators been applied specifically to TGD activism and TGD policy action activities and behaviors. The literature and theoretical frameworks guiding this dissertation provide insight on factors that may influence an individual's participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action, yet there are several significant gaps that limit understanding of the associations between motivators and TGD activism and TGD policy action. First, the broader activism literature does not explicitly include TGD individuals or TGD activism and TGD policy action activities and behaviors. Much of the limited extant research on TGD activism is primarily from studies investigating the resilience of TGD individuals, identifying an association between minority stress and civic action (Bockting et al., 2019; Breslow et al., 2015; Singh, 2013; Singh et al., 2011; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). Although this is informative and a significant contribution to the literature, it falls short of inquiring about the specificities or the moment in time that influenced one's desire to take action or participate in some form of activism or policy, much less TGD activism and TGD policy action. Further, the literature does not examine the range or spectrum of TGD activism and TGD policy action activities, nor does it explore the decision-making process for individuals to decide to participate in activism or policy action.

Second, the research on both LGBQ+ and TGD activism participation focuses on LGBTQ+ individuals themselves. Although this is important research that demonstrates the significance of community connectedness as a possible predictor for activism among LGBTQ+ individuals (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Billard, 2021; Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Harris et al., 2013, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Montagno et al., 2021; Pender et al., 2019; Santos & VanDaalen, 2018; Singh & McKleroy, 2011, 2011), the literature does not address the motivators for heterosexual and/or cisgender individuals to participate in LGBQ+ or TGD

activism and policy action activities. Only three studies (Chan & Mak, 2020; Holloway et al., 2022; Parent & Silva, 2018) explored the general experiences of heterosexual cisgender individuals participating in LGBTQ+-related activism. Other literature limitedly explores the experiences of cisgender parents of TGD children and their experiences with advocacy, but not necessarily with activism or policy action (Manning et al., 2015; McNeilly, 2021; Neary, 2021).

Finally, only one study explores the spectrum of low and high-risk activism and the TGD sample in this study was too small for statistical analysis (Pender et al., 2019). Another study explores the association between high-risk activism and psychological distress among LGB racial/ethnic minority individuals, but does not account for the spectrum and assessment of risk; nor does it include TGD individuals (Santos & VanDaalen, 2018). The extant literature exploring activism and policy action does not consider the motivations that TGD or cisgender individuals may possess prior to participating in TGD activism or TGD policy action.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to examine what motivates individuals to engage in transgender and gender diverse (TGD) activism and policy action, based on the theoretically and empirically based motivators tied to participation in civic engagement discussed in Chapter 2. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used that encompassed collecting quantitative survey data (N = 954) first, then explaining these results with in-depth qualitative data collected from focus groups (n = 5) and an interview (n = 1) for a total of 22 participants in Phase 2.

In Phase 1, cross-sectional survey data were collected to assess the motivators associated with engaging in different types of TGD activism and TGD policy action. Eligibility criteria for participating in the survey included being 18 years of age or older, currently residing in the United States, and believing that TGD individuals deserve equal rights. During the second (qualitative) phase, five focus groups and one interview were conducted with participants from Phase 1 as a follow-up to the quantitative phase to help explain how the motivators influence engagement in different types of TGD activism and policy action.

The Phase 1 results provided guidance for the creation of a focus group guide, and selected survey respondents from the first phase were invited to participate in the second phase (please refer to the Phase 2 Methods section). Additionally, using the quantitative data from Phase 1 statistical inferences that needed further explanation were identified. This allowed for the qualitative data from Phase 2 to provide additional context and insight that would otherwise not be available from Phase 1 alone. Phase 1 and Phase 2 received separate institutional review board approval from Michigan State University.

Phase 1 Methods

Sample Size

A power analysis was conducted prior to launching the survey to ensure that structural equation modeling (SEM) could be used for the analysis. However, there is not a consensus on the required sample size for SEM. Generally, a minimum of 100-200 responses is an acceptable sample size dependent upon the complexity of the SEM model. However, other guidance suggests 10–20 observations per indicator (Beran & Violato, 2010; Kline, 2010). Applying this latter method, the sample size for 20 observations for each of the 34 observed variables (33 indicators and the gender variable) would require a sample size of 680. When using a G*Power analysis, 414 is the recommended sample size (Faul et al., 2007). Using *R*, the number of observations necessary to power the model is 70 (Moshagen & Erdfelder, 2016). Considering all these approaches, the most conservative target sample size was 680 using the 20 observations per indicator approach.

Recruitment and Data Collection

Recruitment took place in November and December 2022. Convenience sampling was utilized for recruiting during this phase of the study and occurred primarily via social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) and via email by contacting LGBTQ+ organizations (e.g. equality organizations, PFLAG chapters, and LGBTQ+ Centers) across the United States. Convenience sampling utilizing social media outreach has been demonstrated as an effective strategy for reaching niche, hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations (McRobert et al., 2018). Additionally, convenience sampling can reduce mistrust among vulnerable populations (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). In the case of the sample for this study, using trusted community organizations likely demonstrated to potential participants that the study and research team was

trustworthy, that the study was aligned with their values, and participation risks were assessed, aligning with Ellard-Gray et al. (2015) findings in the benefits of using convenience sampling for hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations.

The study was described to potential participants as an opportunity to engage in research to better understand who participates in TGD justice advocacy (and why) in order to inform strategies for engagement in TGD activism and TGD policy action. This email was sent to 242 LGBTQ+ equality organizations, community centers, and campus centers as well as 368 PFLAG chapters with publicly available email addresses. Those who were directly contacted via email were encouraged to participate in the survey and share the survey information with their professional and personal networks. Those who were under the age of 18 years old, did not currently reside in the United States, or did not believe TGD individuals deserve equal rights were not eligible to participate in the survey. Full eligibility criteria is described in detail below.

Data were collected using the secure survey platform Qualtrics during the months of November and December 2022. Participants were first asked to read an informed consent page and actively click to provide their consent before the survey started, and were then screened for eligibility criteria. To reduce the likeliness of fraud or bots, Qualtrics fraud detection services were utilized. This includes preventing multiple submissions, bot detection using a Captcha question and reCAPTCHA technology, and tracking metadata through RelevantID. However, no incentive was provided for survey completion, reducing the risk of fraud or bots that target financial incentives.

Measures

Survey measures included participant eligibility, demographics, participation in TGD activism, participation in TGD related policy action, political salience, community

connectedness, social movement organization involvement, and political efficacy. Per best practice, five cognitive interviews were conducted to pretest the survey with TGD and cisgender individuals who have engaged in TGD activism and/or TGD policy action (Boateng et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2012). The average time to complete the survey was 7 minutes. Interviewees were asked to share their thoughts and reactions with me following the completion of the survey. Then I verbally probed interviewees to assess the survey's relevance, question comprehension, gaps, and cultural responsiveness. This engagement with community members elevated the voices of the TGD and ally community—and advocacy practitioners—and ensured the constructs were relevant and acurate to the community itself. This is a central part of community-engaged research and better ensures that my bias as a scholar was not unknowingly integrated into the development of the constructs of TGD activism and TGD policy action or the motivators (Wallerstein et al., 2020).

Eligibility Criteria

- Consent and 18+ years of age or older. By clicking yes, you consent to participation in this survey and confirm that you are at least 18 years of age or older. Those who did not consent were directed out of the survey.
- State of Residence. In which state or territory do you currently reside in the United States? Responses included a drop-down list of all states and territories of the United States. Those who selected that they do not currently reside in the United States were directed out of the survey.
- Equal Rights. Do you believe that TGD people deserve equal rights in the United States? Those who select "no" were directed out of the survey.

Sociodemographics

Age. Age was collected by asking the question: *What is your age (in years)?* This question had option to insert a whole number. The age question was used both to determine eligibility (those who reported an age under 18 years were directed out of the survey) and as a demographic variable.

Gender. There were two gender questions informed by best practices (Puckett et al., 2020). The first question was adapted from Puckett et al. (2020) to capture a variety of gender identities and expression. This question was *What best describes your current gender (select all that apply)?* Responses included: *woman, female, trans woman, transfeminine; man, male, trans man, transmasculine; nonbinary, genderqueer, gender fluid; agender; another gender not listed – fill in the blank.* A second gender question was asked to allow participants to self-identify as transgender, nonbinary, or cisgender for the purpose of quantitative analysis to avoid misrepresenting the gender of participants by subjectively recoding and condensing identities from the first gender question. The second gender question was: *Due to limitations in working with quantitative data, this next question is being asked so that you choose what broader gender term best describes you. Which one BEST describes your current gender?* There were three response options. The first option was *transgender, trans, transsexual, a trans man, a trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine, or a person of transgender experience;* the second option was *nonbinary, gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender queer, gender creative, agender, or another expansive gender*; and the last option was *cisgender or someone who is NOT transgender, nonbinary, or gender diverse.*

Sexual Orientation. This was an adapted version of the 2016 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services testing of sexual orientation question. *What best describes your sexual*

orientation (select all that apply) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services [CMS], 2016)*?* Response options included *lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, heterosexual, another sexual orientation not listed – fill in the blank.* This yielded a total of 54 unique sexual orientation categories across participants. From these categories, a six-category analytical variable was created that included asexual or demisexual, bisexual or pansexual, gay or lesbian, heterosexual or straight, multiple orientations, and queer. Respondents that selected more than one sexual orientation were coded as multiple orientations. Fill-in text for "other" responses (n = 28) was assigned to the most relevant of the six sexual orientation categories. One respondent only selected *another sexual orientation not listed*, but left it blank. Another respondent only selected *another sexual orientation not listed*, but the identity does not fit any of the six categories. Therefore, sexual orientation has two missing responses.

Race. To ascertain participants' primary racial identity, they were asked: *What best describes your racial identity (select all that apply)?* Response options were: *Black/African American, Chinese, Cuban, Filipino, Guamanian or Chamorro, Indigenous (Native American/Alaska Native), Japanese, Korean, Latintx/Latine, Mexican or Chicano/a/x, Middle Eastern, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, Puerto Rican, Samoan, South Asian, Vietnamese, White, or Another racial identity– fill in the blank.* (Ross et al., 2020). This yielded a total of 61 unique racial identity categories across participants. For data analysis purposes, an analytical variable was created with six categories. The categories included Asian or Pacific Islander (included Chinese, Filipino, Guamanian or Chamorro, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, Samoan, South Asian, Vietnamese), Black or African American, Indigenous, Native American, or Alaskan Native, Latinx or Chicanx (included Cuban, Latinx/Latine, Mexican or Chicano/a/x, and Puerto Rican), multiracial (more than one racial

identity selected), and White. Fill-in text for "another racial identity" responses (n = 18) was assigned to the most relevant of the six racial identity categories.

Income. Income was ascertained by asking, *What is your approximate annual household income?* Response options were: *less than $10,000; $10,000–$19,999; $20,000–$29,999; $30,000–$39,999; $40,000–$49,999; $50,000–$59,999; $60,000–$69,999; $70,000–79,999; $80,000–$89,999; $90,000–$99,999; $100,000–$149,999; and More than $150,000* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). Due to the distribution of responses, an analytical variable was created using four categories: $49,999 or less, $50,000-$99,999, $100,000-$149,999, and $150,000 or More.

Education. Education was be assessed by asking, *What is your highest level of education completed?* Response options were: *I did not finish high school, high school diploma/GED, some college, associate's/vocational degree, bachelor's degree, post graduate degree.* (CDC, 2021). Due the number of low responses for the two categories of High School Diploma/GED, and I did not finish high school, these two categories were combined into a single category of High School Diploma or Less.

Community Setting. To assess a participant's community setting, this single forced-choice question was asked: *How do you best describe the community where you currently live?* Response options included: *a city, a suburb, a small town, a rural area.* (Pew Research Center, n.d.)

Disability. Participants were asked two-tiered questions about their disability status: *Do you have a disability, impairment, medical condition, chronic illness, or identify as disabled?* Response options include: *yes, prefer not to say,* or *no*. Those who responded "Yes" to the first question, received the following question as well: *If yes, which of the following best describes*

your disability(ies), impairment(s), or medical condition(s)? Check all that apply. Responses options were: *ADD/ADHD, Learning Disability (such as dyslexia), Mobility Disability/Impairment, Autistic, Neurological Disability/Impairment (such as TBI), Chronic Illness/Chronic Fatigue, Chronic Pain, Deaf/HoH, Blind/Visual Impairment, Psychiatric or Socioemotional Disability/Impairment (such as depression, anxiety, or BPD), Fill-in: Another disability, impairment, or medical condition not listed here* (Kattari, Kattari, et al., 2022).

Religion and Religiosity. Two forced-choice questions about religion were asked from the Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Survey. The first question is: *What is your present religion, if any?* Response options were: *Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox such as Greek or Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, Something Else, or Nothing in Particular?* Based on the distribution of responses, religion was recoded from 13 response options to four categories including Agnostic/Atheistic/Nothing in Particular, Christian (including Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox), Jewish, and Something Else (including Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and something else).

The second question was: *How important is religion in your life?* Response options included: *very important, somewhat important, not too important, not at all important* (Pew Research Center, n.d.).

Political Ideology. This question asked: *In general, would you describe your political views as* with response options including: *very liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, or very conservative* (Pew Research Center, n.d.). Due to symmetric bimodal data distribution, political ideology was condensed into three categories by combining very conservative with conservative

and very progressive with progressive. The analytical variable has three categories of Conservative, Moderate, or Progressive.

Relationship to a TGD person. The last demographic question ascertained if a person was TGD themselves or how a person described their relationship with a TGD person. The question asks: *How do you best describe your primary relationship to a TGD person (please select all that apply)?* Response options include: *I am a TGD person, I am a partner or spouse of a TGD person, I am a parent of a TGD person, I am a sibling of a TGD person, I am an extended family member of a TGD person (such as a grandparent or cousin), I am a close friend of a TGD person, I am a colleague of a TGD person, I am an acquaintance of a TGD person, I do not personally know a TGD person.* This question yielded 101 unique categories. These were condensed into three categories focused primarily on the theory that knowing a TGD person may influence participation in TGD activism or policy action. The three categories are: Is a TGD person, Cisgender and Knows a TGD person, and Cisgender and does not know a TGD person.

Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables assessing TGD activism and policy action were adapted from the previously validated Activism Orientation Scale (AOS; Corning & Myers, 2002) to specifically assess TGD activism and policy action activities and behaviors. The AOS was adapted by changing the language from broader political engagement to TGD specific political engagement. For example, the term "political message" was adapted to be specific to "political messages about the TGD community" and "political issue" was adapted to "TGD issues." Items are summed on a 4-point Likert-like scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of activism and policy action.

Activism. Activism was assessed by asking the following question: *How often do you participate in the following activities?* Response options included *Never* (1), *Rarely* (2), *Occasionally* (3), *or Frequently* (4). The activism activities included: (a) attend a TGD-related advocacy event such as a protest or rally; (b) post or share social media content about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community; (c) give lectures or talks about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community; (d) publicly display political messages about the TGD community (e.g., wearing a t-shirt, button, or sticker); (e) advocate for TGD-inclusive practices in schools, workplaces, community centers, or other establishments such as for a gender-inclusive bathroom; (f) donate money to a TGD justice organization; and (g) confront transphobic or gender-essentialist comments, jokes, statements, or innuendos.

Policy Action. Policy action was assessed by asking the following question: *How often do you participate in the following activities?* Response options included *Never* (1), *Rarely* (2), *Occasionally* (3), *or Frequently* (4). The policy action activities included: (a) provide public comment or testimony to advocate for or against TGD-specific legislation or policy at local, state or national levels (e.g., state legislature, school board, governmental agency); (b) lobby or engage directly with an elected-official about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community; (c) organize political events specific to the TGD community; (d) participate in a TGD policy-related awareness raising such as canvassing, phone/text-banking, or writing an op-ed; (e) end a letter or email about TGD issues to an elected-official; (f) keep track of the views of elected officials regarding TGD rights and justice; and (g) vote for elected officials because of their stance on TGD justice.

Independent Variables

Political Salience. Political salience has historically been measured qualitatively through an open-ended most important problem/issue question (Moniz & Wlezien, 2020). However, measuring an individual's concern toward an issue has been a promising approach to quantify political salience of a specific social issue according to Moniz and Wlezien (2020). For this study, an investigator-initiated political salience latent variable was developed using six indicators assessing an individual's concerns for current TGD-related policy. Items were summed on a 5-point Likert-like scale, with higher scores indicating greater political salience. Political salience was assessed by asking: *How concerned are you about policy related to . . .* with the following responses: *Not at all concerned* (1), *Slightly concerned* (2), *Somewhat concerned* (3), *Moderately concerned* (4), *Extremely concerned* (5). Items included (a) access to gender-affirming health care; (b) access to nongendered spaces such as restrooms, locker rooms and other traditionally gender segregated facilities; (c) TGD involvement in sports; (d) antibullying or safe school initiatives for TGD students; (e) TGD nondiscrimination protections for employment and public accommodations; and (f) access to age-appropriate and culturally relevant education material about TGD history and historical figures in schools.

Community Connectedness. An investigator-initiated community connectedness latent variable was developed for this study by using four indicators. Three indicators were adapted from a Harris et al. (2015) study that explored the association between sociopolitical involvement and sense of belonging, with the original items having a Cronbach alpha of 0.71, indicating a good fit. This adaptation included changing "LGB" to "TGD." The other variable was investigator-developed from examining qualitative data related to conceptualizations of experiencing community connectedness among LGBTQ+ individuals engaged in TGD justice

(Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Singh et al., 2011; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). Items were scored on a 5-point Likert-like scale, with higher scores indicating greater connectedness. *Community connectedness* was measured by asking*: Please rate each item as Strongly Agree* (5), *Agree* (4), *Neutral* (3), *Disagree* (2), *Strongly Disagree* (1). The four items for assessing community connectedness were: *I feel connected to the TGD community* (adapted Harris et al., 2015), *I feel connected to other individuals who advocate for TGD justice, The problems faced by the TGD community are also my problems* (adapted Harris et al., 2015), and *I feel a bond with TGD people* (adapted Harris et al., 2015).

Social Movement Organization Involvement. Prior studies have found that volunteering, working with, knowing someone who volunteers or works with a social movement organization, or social media interaction with a social movement organization may be a strong predictor of engaging in activism or policy action (Gandy-Guedes & Paceley, 2019; Klandermans, 1984; Reda et al., 2021; Robertson & Carroll, 2018; Singh, 2013; Vázquez, 2015). Therefore, the investigator-initiated social movement organization involvement latent variable was developed to assess varying levels of engagement with social movement organizations. All items were positively worded and summed on a 4-point Likert-like scale. Four questions assessed social movement organization involvement by asking participants to: *Please rate each item as Never* (1), *Rarely* (2), *Occasionally* (3), *or Frequently* (4). Items included: *I work or volunteer with an advocacy organization or coalition that works toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc.), My close friends work or volunteer with advocacy organizations or coalitions that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc.), I closely follow the social media accounts of advocacy organizations or coalitions that work toward TGD justice (Equality*

organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc.), and *I feel connected to advocacy organizations or coalitions that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc.).*

Political Efficacy. Political efficacy was assessed using the previously validated Political Efficacy Short Scale (PESS; Groskurth et al., 2021). The McDonald's Omega for the PESS for internal political efficacy is 0.88 and 0.86 for external political efficacy, demonstrating goodness of fit for both subscales with quota samples from Germany and the United Kingdom. All items are positively worded and summed on a 4-point Likert like scale of *never applies* (1), *seldom applies* (2), *sometimes applies* (3), or *most of the time applies* (4). The scale items were: *I am good at understanding and assessing important political issues (Internal), Politicians strive to keep in close touch with the people (External), I have the confidence to take active part in a discussion about political issues (Internal),* and *Politicians care about what ordinary people think (External).*

Data Cleaning

In total there were 1,034 recorded responses. A total of 29 observations did not meet the eligibility criteria with one observation not consenting to participation, eight not responding to currently living in the United States, 10 indicating they do not currently live in the United States, six indicating they do not support TGD justice, and four observations indicated they were under 18 years old. In each of these cases, the survey ended for respondents when they did not fulfill the eligibility criteria. Among the remaining 1,005, 51 observations were partially incomplete. This means a respondent started the survey but did not complete and submit it in the allotted 1-week timeframe set in Qualtrics. In these cases, 35% or more of the survey was incomplete meaning majority of the items representing latent variables were not completed. Listwise

deletion was performed to follow best practices of removing observations with 20% or more of incomplete data (Boateng et al., 2018; Downey & King, 1998; Gottschall et al., 2012; Roth et al., 1999). The total number of participants in the analytical sample was 954.

Statistical Assumptions and Analyses

All statistics were run using Stata 17.0. For continuous items, normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk's normality test demonstrating that only two items (donating funds to TGD justice organizations and close friends work or volunteer for TGD justice organizations) of 32 met the assumptions for normality. Previous research has found nonnormality does not have a significant impact on statistical power in SEM (Lim & Melville, 2009). The Breusch-Pagan and Cook-Weisberg tests were conducted to determine heteroscedasticity in the variance of residuals. Heteroscedasticity was found in regressions with all manifest independent variables fitted to each individual manifest dependent variable. One regression (fitted to the activism behavior of confronting anti-TGD jokes) was found to be homoscedastic. Due to the nonnormal and heteroscedastic data, asymptotic distribution free (ADF) estimate methods were used in SEM analyses.

Multicollinearity was tested on each item in a scale for using the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis. All items demonstrated the lack of multicollinearity was met with VIF scores less than 10. For political efficacy, VIF scores ranged from 1.04–1.47 with a mean VIF of 1.32. For TGD activism, VIF scores ranged from 1.23–1.58 with a mean VIF of 1.36. For TGD policy action, VIF scores ranged from 1.52–1.94 with a mean VIF of 1.70. For political salience, VIF scores ranged from 1.25–1.53 with a mean VIF of 1.43. For community connectedness, VIF scores ranged from 1.44–1.97 with a mean VIF of 1.73. For social movement organization involvement, VIF scores ranged from 1.41–1.62 with a mean VIF of 1.47.

Measurement Fit

To determine measurement fit, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for each scale using Stata sem command with asymptotic distribution free (ADF) to account for nonnormality. Measurement model fit was assessed by examining factor loadings, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMSR) as described in best practices for the sample size and nonnormal distribution (Alavi et al., 2020; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2010). Recommended cut-off for each of these tests include factor loadings with standardized beta coefficients of 0.40 or higher. The RMSEA has a lowest possible value of 0.00 values ranging from 0 as a perfect fit, less than 0.05 as a good fit, 0.05–0.08 as an acceptable fit, and greater than or equal to 1.00 as a poor fit. The comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) have ranges of 0–1, a lower value indicates a poorer fit and a higher value indicates a better fit with a value equal to or greater than 0.90 being desired for acceptable fit. SRMSR have values that range from 0 as a perfect fit, 0–0.05 as a good fit, 0.05–.10 as an acceptable fit and values greater than 0.10 are a poor fit.

TGD Activism and Advocacy

A CFA was conducted (N = 949) to determine an ambiguous fit. Factor loadings ranged from 0.43 through 0.71 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.08), CFI (.84), TFI (.76), and SRMR (.05). The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.82. Overall, the seven items of the TGD Activism Scale have ambiguous goodness of fit measurements. To address this discrepancy, modification indices were performed to identify which items could be modified to improve the model fit. The CFA

and goodness of fit tests were rerun with shared error variance to address conceptual similarity in Item 3 and Item 5. The fit remained ambiguous.

A CFA was run with the removal of Items 3 and 5 (N = 950). Factor loadings ranged from 0.41 to 0.73 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.03), CFI (.98), TFI (.96), and SRMR (.02) demonstrating a good fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.75. The final TGD Activism latent variable is a five-item scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the TGD Activism scale is 0.71 demonstrating acceptable coefficient reliability (see Table 2).

Table 2

Finalized TGD Activism and Advocacy Scale Items

Item	Action
Item 1	Attend a TGD-related advocacy event such as a protest or rally.
Item 2	Post or share social media content about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
Item 3 (REMOVED)	Give lectures or talks about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
Item 4	Publicly display political messages about the TGD community (such as by wearing a t-shirt, button, or sticker).
Item 5 (REMOVED)	Advocate for TGD-inclusive practices in schools, workplaces, community centers, or other establishments such as for a gender-inclusive bathroom.
Item 6	Donate money to a TGD justice organization.
Item 7	Confront transphobic or gender-essentialist comments, jokes, statements, or innuendos.

TGD Policy Action

CFA was run (N = 952) with the original seven items of the TGD policy action scale. Factor loadings ranged from 0.16–0.81 with two items (Item 6 and Item 7) below the threshold for demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.13), CFI (.63), TFI (.45), and SRMR (.20) demonstrating a poor fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.86.

Modification indices suggested exploring the shared error variances of Items 6 and 7 as well as Items 3 and 5. The CFA and goodness of fit tests were rerun. However, the poor fit remained and factor loadings for Items 6 and 7 dropped below the 0.4 threshold for discriminant validity.

The modification indices provide solely empirical suggestions for model fit. Based on factor loadings and consistently poor fit Items 6 and 7 were then removed from the model. Additionally, Item 4 had factor loadings below the 0.4 threshold when Items 6 and 7 were removed; therefore, Item 4 was also removed from the measurement model.

A CFA was run with the remaining for items (N = 954). Factor loadings ranged from 0.59 to 0.81 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.08), CFI (.95), TFI (.85), and SRMR (.04) demonstrating an acceptable fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.80. The final TGD policy action scale is a four-item scale (see Table 3).

Table 3

Finalized TGD Policy Action Scale Items

Item	Action
Item 1	Provide public comment or testimony to advocate for or against TGD-specific legislation or policy at local, state or national levels (state legislature, school board, governmental agency, etc.).
Item 2	Lobby or engage directly with an elected-official about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
Item 3	Organize political events specific to the TGD community.
Item 4 (REMOVED)	Participate in a TGD policy-related awareness raising such as canvassing, phone/text-banking, or writing an op-ed.
Item 5	Send a letter or email about TGD issues to an elected-official.
Item 6 (REMOVED)	Keep track of the views of elected officials regarding TGD rights and justice.
Item 7 (REMOVED)	Vote for elected officials because of their stance on TGD justice.

Political Salience

CFA and goodness of fit tests (N = 952) were run with the original six items making up the political salience latent variable. Factor loadings ranges of 0.51 to 0.71 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.05), CFI (.91), TFI (.86), and SRMR (.09) demonstrating an ambiguously acceptable fit. Modification indices recommended a shared error variance for Items 4 and 5. The CFA was rerun with goodness-of-fit indices of RMSEA (.03), CFI (.97), TFI (.94), and SRMR (.05) demonstrating an acceptable fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.77.

Community Connectedness

CFA and goodness of fit tests (N = 953) were run with the original four items making up the community connectedness latent variable. Factor loadings ranged from 0.57–0.82 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.13), CFI (.86), TFI (.58), and SRMR (.05) demonstrating poor fit. Modification indices suggested a shared error variance for Items 1 and 2. The CFA (N = 953) and goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.00), CFI (1.00), TFI (1.03), and SRMR (.02) demonstrating an acceptable fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.86.

Social Movement Organization Involvement

CFA and goodness of fit tests (N = 953) were run with the original four items making up the social movement organization involvement latent variable with ambiguous results. Factor loadings ranged from 0.62–0.77 demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.15), CFI (.88), TFI (.63), and SRMR (.06). Modification indices suggested the shared variance of Items 1 and 2. The CFA was rerun (N = 953) with factor loadings ranged from .50–.85 suggesting an acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-

fit indices found RMSEA (.02), CFI (1.0), TFI (1.00), and SRMR (.01) demonstrating an acceptable fit. The equation-level goodness of fit test has an overall R^2 of 0.79.

Political Efficacy

CFA and goodness of fit tests were run with Items 1 and 3 for internal political efficacy and for Items 2 and 4 for external political efficacy. Convergence was not achieved for either of these models. Therefore, a CFA and goodness of fit tests (N = 953) were run with the four items creating one political efficacy latent variable. Factor loadings ranged from 0.22–0.86 with two items (Item 1 and Item 3) below the threshold for demonstrating acceptable fit for convergent validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.22), CFI (.71), TFI (.14), and SRMR (.20) demonstrating poor fit. The modification indices identified that Items 2 and 4 and Items 1 and 3 should be modified for shared covariance errors. A CFA was rerun (N = 953) with factor loadings ranging from .37–.42 demonstrating questionable construct validity. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.00), CFI (1.00), TFI (1.00), and SRMR (.02) demonstrating an acceptable fit but due to the shared error variance across all items. Due to lack of goodness of fit and convergent validity for this measurement model, it will be dropped from the structural equation model and only bivariate results will be provided.

Scale Internal Consistency and Reliability

To determine scale reliability inter-item correlation coefficient (ICC) and Cronbach's alphas were used (see Table 4). ICC assesses for item redundancy to determine if items are measuring the same content. ICC should be between .2–.5, which demonstrates that items are similar but unique enough to not be isomorphic (Clark & Watson, 1995). Cronbach's alpha is often used to determine internal consistency. A value of .06 or above is adequate for the Cronbach's Alpha (Clark & Watson, 1995).

Table 4

Descriptives, Inter-Item Correlation, and Cronbach's Alpha for Scales

Scale	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Items	Inter-item correlation	Cronbach α
TGD Activism	954	14.30	3.11	5	.33	.71
TGD Policy Action	954	6.75	2.66	4	.45	.77
Political Efficacy	953	11.66	1.66	4	.10	.59
Political Salience	953	25.65	3.8	6	.35	.73
Community Connectedness	954	16.89	2.85	4	.49	.80
Social Movement Organization Involvement	954	11.95	2.82	4	.41	.74

Structural Models

TGD Activism

A CFA and goodness-of-fit tests ($N = 946$) were run to assess the structural model that examines the relationship between the three independent latent variables of political salience (with shared error variance of Items 4 and 5), community connectedness (with shared error variance of Items 1 and 2), and social movement organization involvement (with shared error variance of Items 1 and 2) with the five-item dependent latent variable of TGD activism. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.06), CFI (.64), TFI (.58), and SRMR (.18) demonstrated poor fit.

Modification indices were explored empirically and theoretically. The structural model was adapted to integrated a shared error variance between Item 3 of the social movement organization involvement scale and Item 2 of the TGD activism scale. Both items address social media usage and theoretically align with the empirical modification indices suggestion. Additionally, shared error variances among the three independent latent variables and between Items 3 and 4 on both community connectedness and social movement organization scales were

integrated into the structural model. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.03), CFI (.90), TFI (.90), and SRMR (.07) demonstrated acceptable fit.

TGD Policy Action

A CFA and goodness-of-fit tests (N = 950) were run to assess the structural model that examines the relationship between the three independent latent variables of political salience (with shared error variance of Items 4 and 5), community connectedness (with shared error variance Items of 1 and 2), and social movement organization involvement (with shared error variance of Items 1 and 2) with the four-item dependent latent variable of TGD policy action. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.06), CFI (.67), TFI (.60), and SRMR (.17) demonstrated poor fit.

Modification indices suggested shared error variances among the three independent latent variables, between Items 3 and 4 on both community connectedness and social movement organization scales, and between Items 1 and 2 on the political salience scale. Additionally shared variances for Items 1 and 2 as well as Items 2 and 3 on the TGD policy action scale were integrated into the structural model. This is theoretically justified because each of the actions of lobbying elected officials, attending political events, and providing public comment can all occur in one day and be connected to each other such as at a lobbying day event. Goodness-of-fit indices found RMSEA (.03), CFI (.90), TFI (.90), and SRMR (.06) demonstrated acceptable fit.

Phase 2 Methods

As part of the explanatory sequential design, the purpose of Phase 2 was to provide robust context and a more participant focused approach for interpreting and understanding the statistical results in Phase 1 by connecting narratives from participants to help explain statistical results or reveal tensions in the data. Thematic analysis framework was used through Phase 2

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). This framework was selected because it allows for flexible, reflexive, and constructionist identification of patterns across the dataset. The study methods were developed and implemented from a constructionist lens to provide flexibility in the psycho-social influences for TGD activism and TGD policy action. Additionally, thematic analysis acknowledges that themes are not discovered but are defined by the researcher's subjective interpretations of and during study design, data collection and analysis, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022).

Five focus groups and one interview were conducted to enhance the interpretation of the results from Phase 1. The focus groups participants were originally segmented for homogeneity as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Original Segmentation Plan

Category	Participation
Transgender	Participated in activism only
Transgender	Participated in policy action
Nonbinary	Participated in activism only
Nonbinary	Participated in policy action
Cisgender	Participated in activism only
Cisgender	Participated in policy action

Though the original segmentation plan (see Table 5) had to be adapted for scheduling purposes, overall this segmented approach allowed for more open conversations during the focus groups and fosters an opportunity of in-group comparisons during analysis (Morgan, 1997). This segmentation by gender was important for data interpretation distinctions between cisgender participants and TGD participants.

Focus Group Guide

The focus group discussion guide (see Appendix C) included a presentation of some demographic data and bivariate data from Phase 1 as well as the structural regression model results. Discussion guide questions were adapted from a participatory method known as a data party (Kipke, 2019). Participants were asked to provide their reactions to the data including if anything surprised them, how these data may align with their own experience, and what they think contributes to the outcomes. Following the presentation of data (see Appendix C), participants were asked to debrief by reflecting on what resonated with them the most, what actionable steps can be made, and how these data can best be disseminated.

Recruitment and Data Collection

In the first phase, after completing the survey, participants were asked if they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview. If they selected yes, they were taken to a new Qualtrics survey that asked for their name, gender, whether or not they have ever participated in TGD policy action, whether or not they have ever participated in TGD activism, their preferred method of contact (i.e., email, text, phone), and a brief open-text question asking them to briefly describe their activism or policy action experience in one or two sentences.

Purposive sampling (Padgett, 2017) was used to identify and segment participants from the 145 Phase 1 participants who submitted enough information to be recruited for participation in the focus groups. This was done by assigning interested individual participants to one of the groups (trans and participated in activism only, trans and participated in policy action, nonbinary and participated in activism only, nonbinary and participated in policy action, cisgender and participated in activism only, cisgender and participated in policy action) using a number and letter combination. For example, participants who were cisgender and participated in policy

action were given the letters CP and then a number such as 1. The letters were used to distinguish the focus group that participant was assigned to and the number was used for a random number generator to select specific participants for the focus group. The random number generator was used for each of the six focus groups to select participants.

Once participants were identified for each of the focus groups, participants were contacted via email with a copy of the consent form to review as well as a link to fill out an electronic form to determine availability. The electronic form also gave participants an opportunity to select a pseudonym for confidentiality during the focus groups. Based on availability, dates were selected for each of the six focus groups and participants were emailed their assigned date, Zoom link, and other pertinent focus group information including an attached consent form requesting that participants sign and return the consent form via email. Best practices suggest that focus groups have 5–10 participants (Morgan, 1997). Recruitment continued until each group had at least five confirmed participants which was the case for the two cisgender focus groups. A participant was considered confirmed when they returned a signed consent form via email. Recruitment ended for the transgender and nonbinary focus groups after all eligible participants were contacted. A reminder email was sent out to confirmed and nonconfirmed participants the day prior to the scheduled focus group.

The focus groups took between 60–90 minutes, were conducted via Zoom in June 2023, and recorded with Zoom transcription service (see Table 6). Under-enrollment for focus groups may have been due to the timing of sessions during the summer month of Pride (for most states in the United States), when many individuals are traveling and those who work in the LGBTQ+ movement are unavailable due to the focus on pride events. I facilitated the six sessions. Transcriptions were then edited and finalized by me to fully immerse myself in the data (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). Phase 2 participants were sent a $30 electronic gift card to Giftogram via email after completing the focus group; however, one participant asked to have their funds donated to an organization working toward transgender justice.

Table 6

Focus Group Segmentation and Participants

Session number	Focus group segmentation	Number of participants
1	Transgender, participation in activism only	1
2	Transgender, participation in activism and policy action	3
3	Transgender and nonbinary, participation in activism and policy action	6
4	Nonbinary, participation in policy action	2
5	Cisgender and participation in activism and policy action	4
6	Cisgender and participation in activism and policy action	6

Analysis

The analysis team included myself and two community partners, all three with professional and personal experience with TGD research and TGD civic engagement. The analysis team are White, queer, hold Master of Social Work degrees, and currently live in states that have legal protections for TGD individuals. One cocoder and I are trans masculine and the other cocoder is a ciswoman. The cocoders are currently clinicians working with TGD communities.

I created the initial codebook, using deductive and semantic coding specifically to identify participant personal narratives related to and interpretations of Phase 1 data. Three transcripts from Sessions 2, 4, and 5 were used to develop the initial codebook. The two cocoders coded the transcript from Session 6 using the initial codebook and made revisions to the codebook until there was consensus among the three coders. Based on varying perspectives among the analysis team, disconfirming case identification was encouraged through the

codebook development process and discussed as part of the consensus discussions (Booth et al., 2013). Once the codebook was finalized, I coded all six transcripts while the two cocoders each coded three different transcripts using Dedoose. All three coders participated in reflexive memoing throughout the coding process to identify bias, lingering questions, and contradictory data. After the six transcripts were coded, a virtual tabletop theming (Saldaña, 2013) session with one cocoder and I took place where codes were categorized and then placed into themes using Google Jamboard. Memos were reviewed and discussed during this session to ensure the disconfirming cases identified during the analysis process were represented in the themes (Booth et al., 2013). For example, passing privilege among nonbinary individuals was mentioned by some participants, while other participants discussed nonbinary individuals not having passing privilege demonstrating that gender identities, gender expressions, and gendered experiences are much too nuanced and complex to summarize in just one code. Following that tabletop themeing session, the themes and categories were then transferred to Canva to create a thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2022; see Appendix D).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In Chapter 4, I present the results of Phases 1 and 2. In the first section, I describe the results from Phase 1 including Phase 1 sample characteristics, bivariate results, and inferential statistics from SEM analysis. In the second section, I describe Phase 2 results including Phase 2 sample characteristics and a description and operationalization of five semantic themes.

Phase 1 Results

Phase 1 involved a cross-sectional survey (N = 954) that examined the prevalence of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) activism and TGD policy action among various sociodemograhics in the presence of three motivators: (a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, and (c) social movement organization involvement and the relationship between the three motivators and TGD activism and TGD policy action.

Sample Characteristics

Sample characteristics included an examination of frequencies and percentages of sociodemographic variables, including (a) gender, (b) sexual orientation, (c) racial identity, (d) income, (e) education, (f) disability, (g) community type, (h) religion, (i) religiosity, (j) political views, and (k) relationship to a TGD person. This section also includes descriptive statistics for the independent variables—(a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, and (c) social movement organization involvement—and the dependent variables—(a) TGD activism and (b) TGD policy action.

Sociodemographics

All descriptive sample sociodemographic results (N = 954) are presented in Table 7. The mean age of participants was 38.77 years old (SD = 12.17). A majority of the sample was cisgender (62%), fewer than one fourth (23%) were nonbinary, and 16% were transgender.

Among cisgender participants, 59% knew someone who is TGD. In terms of sexual orientation, participants identified as follows: 30% as straight, 29% with multiple orientations, 16% as bisexual or pansexual, 13% as queer, 8% as gay or lesbian, and less than 2% as asexual or demisexual. The racial identity of most participants was White (82%). In terms of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) representation, 9% were multiracial, about 3% were Latinx or Chicanx, less than 3% were Black or African American, 2.5% were Asian or Pacific Islander, and under 1% were Indigenous. A quarter of participants (25%) reported an annual income of less than $50,000, 31% reported an income of between $50,000 and $100,000, 42% reported an income greater than $100,000. Nearly half (46%) of participants identified as disabled. About half of participants (49%) lived in a city, 32% in a suburb, 14% in a small town, and 6% in a rural area. A large majority of participants (59%) had a graduate degree; identified as agnostic, atheist, or believe in nothing in particular (59%); reported low religiosity (M = 1.94, SD = 1.15); and had progressive political views (95%).

Table 7

Participant Sociodemographics (N = 954)

Demographic	Option	*n*	%
Gender	Cisgender	588	61.70
	Nonbinary	217	22.77
	Transgender	148	15.53
	Missing	1	0.10
Sexual orientation	Asexual or demisexual	18	1.89
	Bisexual or pansexual	152	15.93
	Gay or lesbian	79	8.28
	Multiple orientations	280	29.35
	Straight	290	30.40
	Queer	133	13.94
	Missing	2	0.21
Racial identity	Asian/Pacific Islander	24	2.52
	Black or African American	26	2.73
	Indigenous	4	0.42
	Latinx/Chicanx	33	3.46
	Multiracial	89	9.33
	White	778	81.55
Income	$49,999 or less	243	25.47
	$50,000 - $99,999	299	31.34
	$100,000 - $149,999	203	21.28
	$150,000 or more	204	21.38
	Missing	5	0.52
Disability	No	483	50.63
	Prefer not to answer	30	3.14
	Yes	440	46.12
	Missing	1	0.10
Education	High school diploma or less	18	1.89
	Associate's or vocational degree	38	3.98
	Some college	93	9.75
	Bachelor's degree	244	25.58
	Graduate degree	561	58.81
Community type	City	465	48.74
	Rural	54	5.66
	Small town	133	13.94
	Suburbs	301	31.55
	Missing	1	0.10
Religion	Agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular	565	59.22
	Christian	150	15.72
	Jewish	67	7.02
	Something else	164	17.19
	Missing	8	0.84
Political views	Conservative	4	0.42
	Moderate	39	4.09
	Progressive	907	95.07
	Missing	4	0.42
Knows a TGD person	Is a TGD person	366	38.36
	Cisgender—knows a TGD person	564	59.12
	Cisgender—does not know a TGD person	24	2.52

Note. Age: *M* = 38.77, *SD* = 12.17. Religiosity: M = 1.92, SD 1.15. *Religiosity scored on a scale ranging from 1 = *not at all important* to 5 = *extremely important*.

Independent Variables

Political salience scores (*M* = 25.65, *SD* = 3.80, *ICC* = .33, $\alpha = .73$) ranged from 8–29. Higher scores indicate higher levels of political salience related to TGD justice. Community connectedness scores (*M* = 16.89, *SD* = 2.85, *ICC* = .49, $\alpha = .80$) ranged from 4–24. Higher scores represent higher indications of feeling connected to the TGD community. Social movement organization involvement scores (*M* = 11.95, *SD* = 2.83, *ICC* = .41, $\alpha = .74$) ranged from 4–16. Higher scores indicate higher engagement with social movement organizations related to TGD justice. Political efficacy scores (*M* = 11.66, *SD* = 1.66, *ICC* = .10, $\alpha = .59$) ranged from 4–16. External political efficacy scores (*M* = 4.55, *SD* = 1.08, *ICC* = .56, $\alpha = .72$) ranged from 2–8. Higher scores indicate greater presence of political efficacy. All independent variable scales except political efficacy were within an adequate and acceptable ICC and Cronbach's alpha range of greater than or equal to 0.70 (Taber, 2018).

Dependent Variables

Among survey participants, TGD activism scale scores (*M* = 14.30, *SD* = 3.11, *ICC* = .33, $\alpha = .71$) ranged from 5–20. Higher scores indicate higher levels of participation in TGD activism. The TGD policy action scale scores (*M* = 6.75, *SD* = 2.63, *ICC* = .45, $\alpha = .77$) ranged from 4–16. Higher scores indicate higher levels of participation in TGD policy action. Both the TGD Activism and TGD Policy Action Scales were within an adequate and acceptable ICC and Cronbach's alpha range of greater than or equal to 0.70 (Taber, 2018). A paired *t*-test was performed to evaluate whether there was a difference between TGD Activism and TGD Policy Action scores. The results indicated that TGD activism scores were significantly higher than TGD policy action scores (t [949] = 87.38, $p < .001$).

Bivariate Analysis

Due to the nonnormality and heteroscedasticity of the variables, Kruskal–Wallis tests were conducted to test associations between the demographic variables and TGD Activism Scale scores or TGD Policy Action Scale scores. Dunn's tests with Bonferroni corrections were conducted for a post-hoc analysis of within group comparisons using *H* scores. Positive *H* scores indicate the reference group is more likely to participate in TGD activism or policy action, whereas negative *H* scores indicate the reference group is less likely to participate in TGD activism or policy action. Reference groups were chosen based on the category with the most observations within a variable. Due to nonnormality and because the data are ordinal, Spearman's rank correlations were used to test associations between the dependent variables and age, religiosity, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, political salience, community connectedness, and social movement organization involvement.

Bivariate Demographic Associations with TGD Activism

Pairwise comparisons using Dunn's test indicated cisgender respondents were less likely than transgender (*H* [953] = -6.86, $p < .001$) and nonbinary (*H* [952] = -4.10, $p < .001$) respondents to participate in TGD activism. Similarly, straight respondents were less likely to participate in TGD activism than bisexual and pansexual respondents (*H* [951] = -3.24, $p = .009$), gay and lesbian respondents (*H* [951] = -2.87, $p = .03$), respondents with multiple sexual orientations (*H* [951] -7.23), $p < .001$), and queer respondents (*H* [951] -8.1), $p < .001$). Those with an income between $50,000–$99,000 were more likely to participate in TGD activism compared to those who make $49,999 or less (*H* [948] = 3.08, $p = .006$) and those who make $150,000 or more (*H* [948], = 3.04, $p = .007$). Disabled respondents were more likely to participate in TGD activism compared to respondents who do not have a disability (*H* [952] = -

5.04, $p < .001$). Respondents who were agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular were more likely to participate in TGD activism than Christian respondents (H [946] =2.79, $p = .02$). Progressive respondents were more likely to participate in TGD activism than moderate (H [945] = 3.34, $p = .001$) and conservative respondents (H [945] =2.47, $p = .02$). Cisgender respondents who know a TGD person were more likely to participate in TGD activism than cisgender respondents who do not know a TGD person (H [949] = 4.82, $p < .001$) but less likely than TGD respondents (H [949] = -6.47, $p < .001$). Age, racial identity, education, community type, and religiosity were not significantly associated with TGD Activism at the bivariate level. These findings are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Bivariate Associations Between Demographics and TGD Activism

	TGD activism					
Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*H*	χ^2	*p*
Age (N/r)	950		0.06			.07
Gender					53.68	<.001
Cisgender	585	13.72	3.2	-		
Nonbinary	216	15.45	2.53	-6.86		<.001
Transgender	148	14.95	2.97	-4.10		<.001
Sexual orientation					87.93	<.001
Asexual or demisexual	18	13.28	2.37	0.14		1.00
Bisexual or pansexual	152	14.13	3.02	-3.24		<.001
Gay or lesbian	78	14.31	3.09	-2.87		.03
Multiple orientations	279	15.04	2.90	-7.23		<.001
Straight	288	13.12	3.26	-		
Queer	133	15.71	2.31	-8.1		<.001
Racial identity					2.42	.79
Black or African American	26	13.96	3.18	0.55		1.00
Multiracial	88	14.42	3.15	-0.20		1.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	13.96	2.80	0.68		1.00
Latinx/Chicanx	32	13.72	3.20	1.17		1.00
White	776	14.35	3.1	-		
Indigenous	4	13.25	5.38	-0.58		1.00
Income					13.85	<.001
$49,999 or less	243	13.93	3.24	3.08		<.001
$50,000–$99,999	298	14.74	3.03	-		

Table 8 (cont'd)

Variable	TGD activism					
	n	*M*	*SD*	*H*	χ^2	*p*
$100,000–$149,999	203	14.48	2.99	0.97		1.00
$150,000 or more	201	13.96	3.13	3.04		<.001
Disability					25.93	<.001
No	481	13.79	3.27	-		
Prefer not to answer	30	13.87	3.10	0.004		1
Yes	438	14.89	2.84	-5.04		<.001
Education					8.52	.07
High school diploma or less	18	13.39	3.31	1.59		.56
Associate's or vocational degree	38	13.03	3.45	2.42		.08
Some college	93	14.30	2.85	0.63		1.00
Bachelor's degree	244	14.41	3.05	0.12		1.00
Graduate degree	557	14.37	3.14	-		
Community type					3.15	0.37
City	462	14.45	4.03	-		
Rural	54	14.63	2.96	-0.23		1.00
Small town	132	14.17	3.33	0.77		1.00
Suburbs	301	14.07	3.15	1.65		.30
Religion					16.64	<.001
Agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular	563	14.34	3.02	-		
Christian	149	13.48	3.23	2.79		.02
Jewish	66	14.44	3.30	-0.65		1.00
Something else	164	14.87	3.14	-2.25		.07
Religiosity (N/r)	947		-.008			.80
Political views					16.84	<.001
Conservative	4	9.25	3.86	2.47		.02
Moderate	39	12.36	3.75	3.34		<.001
Progressive	903	14.41	3.04	-		
Knows a TGD person					73.43	<.001
Is a TGD person	365	15.24	2.72	-6.47		<.001
Cisgender—knows a TGD person	561	13.86	3.14	-		
Cisgender—does not know a TGD person	24	2.74	3.58	4.82		<.001

Bivariate Demographic Associations With TGD Policy Action

A Spearman's rank correlation found a significant but negligible positive correlation between age and policy action, r (954) = 0.12, $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons using Dunn's test indicated cisgender respondents were less likely than transgender (H [952] = -4.10, $p < .001$) and

nonbinary (H [952] = 4.14, $p < .001$) respondents to participate in TGD policy action. Straight respondents were less likely to participate in TGD policy action than respondents with multiple sexual orientations (H [951] = -4.32, $p < .001$) and queer respondents (H [951] = -5.23, $p < .001$). Those with an income between $50,000–$99,000 were more likely to participate in TGD policy action compared to those who make $49,999 or less ($H$ [951] = 2.90, $p = .01$). Disabled respondents were more likely to participate in TGD policy action compared to respondents who do not have a disability (H [952] = -3.22, $p = .002$). Respondents with a graduate degree (H [953] = 2.55, $p = .05$) were more likely to participate in policy action than those with an associates or vocational degree. Respondents who are agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular were less likely to participate in TGD policy action than Jewish respondents (H [945] = -0.26, $p = .03$). Cisgender respondents who know a TGD person were more likely to participate in TGD policy action than cisgender respondents who do not know a TGD person (H [953] = 2.18, $p = .04$) but less likely to than TGD respondents (H [953] = 4.94, $p < .001$). Other sociodemographic variables of racial identity, community type, and religiosity were not significantly associated with TGD policy action. These findings are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Bivariate Association Between Demographics and Policy Action

Variable	TGD Policy Action					
	n	*M*	*SD*	*H*	χ^2	*p*
Age (N/r)	954		0.12			<.001
Gender					26.82	<.001
Cisgender	588	6.41	2.50	-		
Nonbinary	217	7.16	2.58	-4.14		<.001
Transgender	148	7.47	3.00	-4.10		<.001
Sexual orientation					37.35	<.001
Asexual or demisexual	18	5.72	1.81	0.50		1.00
Bisexual or pansexual	152	7.04	2.61	-1.06		1.00
Gay or lesbian	79	7.03	2.97	-2.26		0.18
Multiple orientations	280	7.04	2.60	-4.32		<.001
Straight	290	6.24	2.54	-		
Queer	133	7.50	2.58	-5.23		<.001
Racial identity					1.18	.95
Black or African American	26	6.65	2.97	0.5		1.00
Multiracial	89	6.94	2.62	-0.85		1.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	6.71	2.94	0.27		1.00
Latinx/Chicanx	33	6.88	2.80	-0.22		1.00
White	778	6.73	2.62	-		
Indigenous	4	6.25	2.22	0.22		1.00
Income					11.89	<.001
$49,999 or Less	242	6.42	2.49	2.90		<.001
$50,000–$99,999	299	7.10	2.77	-		
$100,000–$149,999	203	6.75	2.54	1.30		.59
$150,000 or More	203	6.64	2.66	2.03		.13
Disability					10.14	<.001
No	483	6.56	4.10	-		
Prefer not to answer	30	6.60	3.68	-0.33		1.00
Yes	440	6.97	3.94	-3.22		<.001
Education					9.30	.05
High school diploma or less	18	6.94	3.00	0.76		1.00
Associate's or vocational degree	38	5.79	2.65	2.55		.05
Some college	93	6.94	3.00	0.34		1.00
Bachelor's degree	244	6.56	2.65	1.99		.23
Graduate degree	561	6.88	2.60	-		
Community type					3.94	.27
City	465	6.83	2.63	-		
Rural	54	6.98	2.64	-0.44		1.00
Small town	133	6.89	2.86	0.28		1.00
Suburbs	301	6.51	2.53	1.78		.23
Religion					8.86	.03
Agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular	565	6.60	2.54	-		
Christian	150	6.61	2.64	0.14		1
Jewish	67	7.40	2.62	-0.26		.03

Table 9 (cont'd)

	TGD Policy Action					
Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*H*	χ^2	*p*
Something else	164	7.05	2.86	-1.65		.30
Religiosity (N/r)	951		0.05			.12
Political views					3.85	.15
Conservative	4	4.50	1.00	1.99		.07
Moderate	39	6.67	2.51	0.13		1.00
Progressive	907	6.76	2.64	reference		
Knows a TGD person					31.52	<.001
Is a TGD person	366	7.29	2.75	-4.94		<.001
Cisgender—knows a TGD person	564	6.46	2.53	-		
Cisgender—does not know a TGD person	24	5.25	1.39	2.18		.04

Spearman's rank correlations were conducted to assess the relationship between each independent variable and TGD activism and TGD policy action (see Table 10). For TGD activism, political salience had a positive moderate correlation, r (946) = .36, p < .001; community connectedness had a positive strong correlation, r (947) = .50, p < .001; and social movement organization involvement had a positive strong correlation, r (947) = .59, p < .001. For TGD political action, political salience had a positive weak correlation, r (950) = .23, p < .001; community connectedness had a positive moderate correlation, r (951) = .33, p < .001; and social movement organization involvement had a positive strong correlation, r (951) = .50, p < .001, with TGD policy action.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5
1. TGD activism	1				
2. TGD policy action	.60***	1			
3. Political salience	.36***	.23***	1		
4. Community connectedness	.50***	.33***	.30***	1	

Table 10 (Cont'd)

5. Social movement organization involvement	.59***	.50***	.28***	0.42***	1

Note. ***$p < .001$.

Structural Equation Models

Two structural equation models (SEM) were created to examine the relationship between motivators and TGD activism and motivators and TGD policy action. The SEM results for TGD activism are presented first, followed by the SEM results for TGD policy action.

TGD Activism SEM

A structural regression analysis was conducted to assess the direct effects between the motivators of political salience, community connectedness, and social movement organization involvement and TGD activism (see Figure 3 and Table 11). Political efficacy was dropped from the structural model due to the inability to make the measurement model fit (Kline, 2010). When examining the structural regression model among the total sample, community connectedness (β = .11, p = .01) and social movement organization involvement (β = .66, p = .01) had significant direct effects on TGD activism participation. Political salience did not have a significant effect on TGD activism among the total sample. Among transgender participants, social movement organization involvement was the only motivator that had a significant direct effect on participation TGD activism (β = .60, $p < .001$). Among nonbinary participants, community connectedness (β = .22, p = .01) and social movement organization involvement (β = .58, $p <$ .001) had significant direct effects on participation in TGD activism. Lastly, among cisgender participants, political salience (β = .15, p = .001) community connectedness (β = .15, p = .002), and social movement organization involvement (β = .69, $p < .001$) had significant direct effects on participation in TGD activism.

Figure 3

TGD Activism SEM Diagram (N = 946)

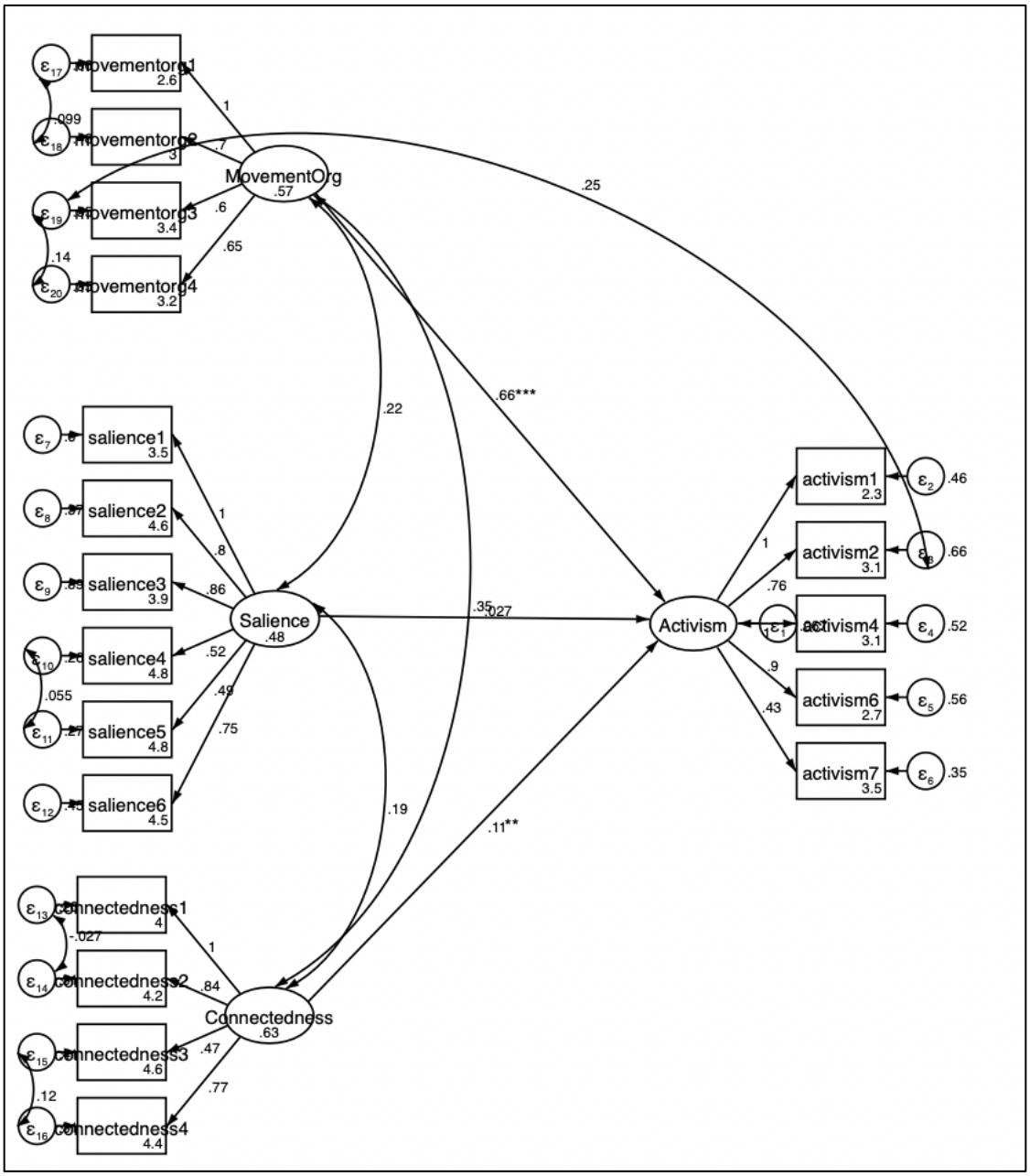


Table 11

Direct Effects of Motivators on TGD Activism by Gender

Sample	Variable	TGD Activism					
		β	*SE*	*z*	95%	CI	*p*
Total sample (*N* = 946)	PS	.03	.04	0.77	-0.04	9.097	.10
	CC	.11	.04	2.57	0.03	0.19	.01
	SMOI	.66	.06	11.83	0.55	0.77	<.001
Transgender (*n* = 147)	PS	.14	.09	1.47	-0.04	0.32	.14
	CC	-.02	.07	-0.31	-0.17	0.12	.76
	SMOI	.60	.08	7.05	0.43	0.76	<.001
Nonbinary (*n* = 215)	PS	.04	.06	0.61	-0.08	0.15	.55
	CC	.22	.09	2.48	0.05	0.4	.01
	SMOI	.57	.07	7.95	0.43	0.71	<.001
Cisgender (*n* = 583)	PS	.15	.04	3.54	0.07	0.23	<.001
	CC	.15	.05	3.05	0.05	0.26	.002
	SMOI	.51	.06	11.31	0.56	0.81	<.001

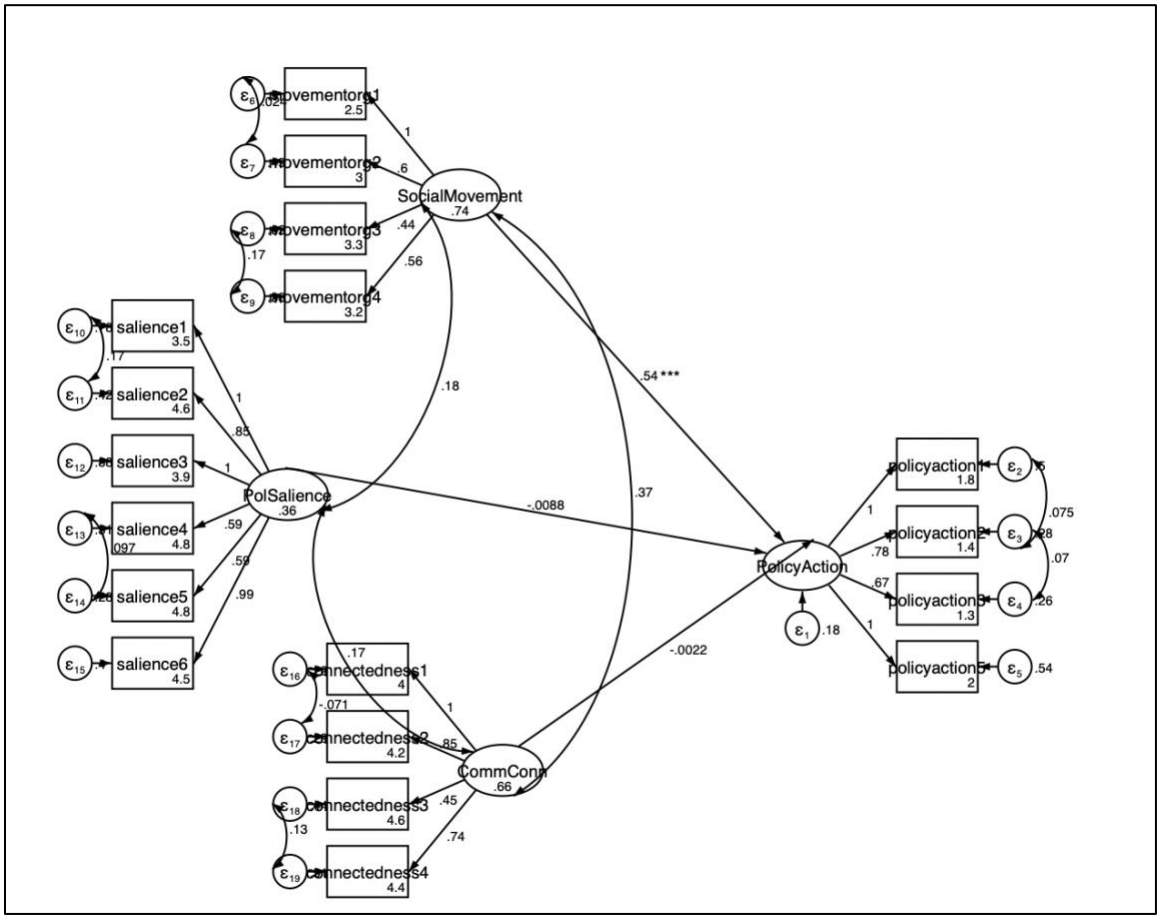
Note. PS = political salience; CC = community connectedness; SMOI = social movement organization involvement; SE = standard error; and CI = confidence interval.

TGD Policy Action SEM

Similarly, a structural regression analysis was conducted to assess the direct effects between the motivators of political salience, community connectedness, and social movement organization involvement and TGD policy action (see Figure 4 and Table 12). Social movement organization involvement was the only motivator that had a significant direct effect among the total sample ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$), transgender participants ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$), nonbinary participants ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$), and cisgender participants ($\beta = .58$, $p < .001$).

Figure 4

TGD Policy Action SEM Diagram (N = 950)



Note. ***$p < .001$.

Table 12

Direct Effects of Motivators on TGD Policy Action by Gender

Sample	Variable	TGD policy action					
		β	*SE*	*z*	95%	CI	*p*
Total sample (*N* = 950)	PS	-.01	.04	-0.21	-0.09	0.08	.75
	CC	-.002	.03	-0.07	-0.07	0.06	.95
	SMOI	.54	.05	11.36	0.44	0.63	<.001
Transgender (*n* = 147)	PS	.30	.16	1.84	-0.02	0.62	.07
	CC	.01	.09	0.14	-0.15	0.19	.89
	SMOI	.57	.12	4.64	0.33	0.81	<.001
Nonbinary (*n* = 216)	PS	.19	.12	0.16	-0.21	0.25	.87
	CC	-.002	.07	-0.03	-0.14	0.14	.98
	SMOI	.57	.10	5.56	0.37	0.78	<.001
Cisgender (*n* = 586)	PS	-.02	.06	-0.26	-0.14	0.11	.80
	CC	-.04	.06	-0.65	-0.16	0.08	.52
	SMOI	.58	.07	8.28	0.45	0.72	<.001

Note. PS = political salience, CC = community connectedness, SMOI = social movement organization involvement, SE = standard error; and CI = confidence interval.

Phase 2 Results

Participant Characteristics

Among the focus group and interview participants, 12 participants were TGD, and 10 participants were cisgender. Fourteen participants indicated they participated in TGD activism only, and eight participants indicated they participated in policy action in addition to activism. Additional background information about participants was not formally collected during Phase 2. This decision was made due to concerns of the increasingly hostile political climate around TGD issues—including universities being asked to provide state officials HIPPA protected health data from university student health services (A. Baker, 2023; Gamble, 2023); the increased doxing of TGD individuals (Ortutay, 2023); and the targeting of diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarship at universities across the United States (Quinn, 2023; Rodriguez, 2023), which may have prevented TGD individuals and cisgender allies from participating in TGD-related research

overall. Although the decision not to gather background information posed a limitation to understanding the nuance of participants multiple identities, some participants shared various identities such as racial, disability, sexuality, region of the United States, political ideology, and religion within the context of the focus groups. This information is shared when relevant to the analysis.

Phase 2 Analysis

Utilzing thematic analysis, coders were organized into categories and categories into themes. Then the research team constructed five semantic themes. These themes were conceptualized to describe participant narratives and motivations for engaging in TGD activism and TGD policy action based on Phase 2 participants' interpretations of the quantitative results from Phase 1 (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). The five themes included (a) Gender Impacts Access and Safety for Participation, (b) Skin in the Game, (c) Performative Allyship is Not Enough, (d) Barriers to Policy Action, and (e) Social Movement Organizations Reduce Barriers.

Theme 1: Gender Impacts Access and Safety for Participation

An overarching theme across all focus groups was the exploration that participation in activism and policy action is influenced by the nuance and complexity of gender and gender identity. There was also no one universal experience across or within the three gender categories used in this study (i.e., cisgender, transgender, and nonbinary). Particularly, many TGD participants did not identify themselves as strictly transgender or strictly nonbinary. A TGD participant from Session 1 stated, "I identify as both trans and nonbinary. Those are equally salient parts of my identity. They're obviously connected, but they're also separate. They're distinct things."

Multiple TGD participants mentioned to the facilitator they did not remember if they selected transgender or nonbinary in the survey to categorize their gender because they have or continue to use both terms to describe their gender. One TGD participant from Session 3 mentioned:

> I've known a lot of binary trans people who later come out as nonbinary once they are more familiar with it or meet other people who identify nonbinary. I've also known a lot of nonbinary people who later identify as binary. So people skip around the categories as well.

Participants in two of the focus groups (Sessions 3 and 6) discussed the novelty of nonbinary as a newer term being used. A TGD participant from Session 3 explained:

> Nonbinary is a newer term, too. So there might actually have an age differential between people who identify as trans and people who identify as nonbinary just because nonbinary is a newer word. And if you came out when people were saying, "I'm either trans or not," you might still stick with that one.

Another central discussion point in each focus group was the concept of having "passing privilege"—being perceived as a cisgender person in public. Although most participants attributed passing privilege to binary transgender individuals—such as a TGD participant from Session 2 expressing, "Nonbinary folks might have to assert their gender nonconformity more than binary trans folks"—some participants also argued nonbinary individuals may experience passing privilege. Participants also discussed, although cisgender individuals generally have cisgender privilege, cisgender people sometimes do not have cisgender passing privilege.

Despite the nuanced concept of gender and passing, participants agreed there was some connection between privilege and participation in activism and policy action. A TGD participant from Session 4 described it this way:

> I hate the term passing. But most people assume I'm female. And so if I'm walking down the street doing activism, I'm less likely to be targeted than somebody who maybe is more visibly different or more visibly showing gender differences from the norm.

Similarly, a cisgender participant from Session 5 said, "As cis people, we have the ability to be safe in our advocacy."

Continuing along the lines of safety, participation in activism and policy action may be impacted on the multiple identities a person holds (e.g., race, class, sexuality, geographic region, religion, education and other salient identities). One TGD participant, who explained their experiences of multiple marginalization as a TGD person and a racialized person in the United States in Session 3, explained:

> I have to go out of my way, and especially because my intersecting identities, it does make me feel less safe. I was in Minnesota around the time that the George Floyd murder happened, and that a lot of protests were going on. And even though it's not necessarily activism in regards to TGD stuff, I was not feeling safe to go to those kinds of protests, because I knew that I would be more visible.

Relatedly, a cisgender participant from Session 6 expressed:

> When I see things that are not right in community, I'm more apt to speak up, depending on my own emotional bandwidth as well as a Black woman who oftentimes is oppressed or silenced in ways that, even in this space, I'm also mindful, because I feel like I'm probably the only one who identifies as Black.

There is overlap between TGD and queer activism and policy action, so those who do not identify under the LGBTQ+ umbrella may struggle with connecting to the larger community and the resources available to get involved. A TGD participant from Session 2 shared this:

> I'm in the queer community and end up in these spaces anyway. A lot of the straight trans women I know feel kind of disconnected from the queer community, just because they're living as straight women. They don't have a lot of the day-to-day experiences we have, especially if they pass.

Theme 2: Skin in the Game

Participants across focus groups consistently mentioned having "skin in the game" influenced whether an individual participated in TGD activism and/or TGD policy action. This was specifically noted by individuals who identify as TGD because they are most impacted by TGD injustice. A TGD participant from Session 4 said, "This is my life on the line. I have to fight for this, because otherwise I lose rights."

However, participants also discussed how their connection to the TGD community and relationships to TGD individuals may also influence their participation, particularly for cisgender individuals. Participants from the cisgender activism and policy action focus groups discussed that proximity to TGD individual such as being a parent or partner will translate to feeling impacted by TGD justice. One cisgender participant from Session 6 announced, "Until you are confronted with a problem, there's more opportunities to ignore it." In contrast, a TGD participant from Session 2—while discussing differences between trans, nonbinary, and cisgender individuals—said, "Maybe trans people are feeling that they need to participate in activism regardless of how close they feel to other community members."

All participants expressed having some form of skin in the game whether it was because they are TGD or they have a close relationship to a TGD person. However, motivation for participation in TGD activism and policy action was not just focused on personal experience or connection. Multiple participants across focus groups expressed their empathy for the broader TGD community—such as TGD youth or even those they might not know personally—that ignites their participation. One TGD participant from Session 5 explained, "A big part of advocacy for us is bringing humanity back into the room in the best way we can; I am a safer messenger as a cis woman and so that's part of it."

A similar humanizing sentiment was expressed by a TGD participant from Session 4:

> I don't show up because I think it'll work. I think it won't work. I think we're gonna lose. But I feel like it's important to be there anyway, and to show people that we exist and we care, and to show other trans people who can't be there, that there are people who will be there for you, bear witness to the atrocities that are being visited upon our community.

Relatedly, trans and nonbinary participants may participate in TGD activism and policy to honor TGD individuals who cannot show up for various reasons (e.g., safety, access, or because they passed away). A TGD participant from Session 3 expressed a sentiment of survivors guilt as a motivator:

> I have friends who have died because of the horrible things that are happening in this world, and they're no longer here anymore. But I carry them with me. That's one of the things that drives me to keep going. The overwhelming indignity that I survived, and they did not.

Whether for their own personal survivance[1] of transphobic institutions and systems, for those of their loved ones, or as tribute to those who came before or will come later, participants shared an internalized impact of TGD injustice; yet, how they expressed their activism and policy action varied greatly.

Theme 3: Performative Allyship Is Not Enough

Consistently across the focus groups, participants described a broad range of activities that fall under activism and policy action. The range of activities may be focused more on interpersonal work through education and "changing hearts and minds" of individuals because there are fewer barriers to doing this form of activism. Such activism may include social media posts, education or training, and organizational change with colleagues. These educational or awareness raising activities were considered foundational as participants noted the general public is overall not aware or educated about gender beyond the binary. This was keenly expressed by one cisgender participant from Session 5 who explained, "Anytime you assume people have base knowledge about different gender identities or pronouns, you kind of get disappointed because most people don't have that base knowledge."

Participants in all focus groups discussed the desire for cross-movement solidarity and described how justice is intersectional. One TGD participant from Session 2 described it like this:

> We have to include intersectional work because we have to unlock these systems of oppression that are keeping everybody down. They damage everyone. And so it's really important to make sure that we do include transness in our reproductive justice. We

[1] Survivance is a term coined by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor (2008) to describe Indigenous people's survival and resistance to settler colonialism. It is being adapted here and applied to surviving and resisting cis-hetero-normative patriarchy ungirded by settler colonialism and white supremacy. More information on survivance can be found in Vizenor's (2008). *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence.*

include Blackness, and Black Lives Matter in all of our work for trans and nonbinary people.

In Session 4, however, participants expressed frustration with interpersonal level activities. One participant explained:

> If I had to pick, I would much rather that you fuck up my pronouns and misgender me all the time, which you already do, but show up. Show up and drop a card against the bill, show up and testify. Call your lawmakers and say, "I'm a random person, and I'm not okay with this."

Participants shared sentiment, primarily among TGD individuals, that, even with basic education, allies may still perform microaggressions and, particularly in the current political climate, TGD participants need more from cisgender allies.

Across all focus groups, participants conveyed frustration with performative allyship. Participants critiqued allyship at both the individual and organizational levels. Social media was brought up as the most common form of performative allyship with "superficial" posts that simply share content being the most common type of performative allyship. One cisgender participant from Session 6 said this:

> If you're performing your activism, you're not writing, you're not taking the time out of your day to write to your Congress member. That's a very invisible type of labor. Even if you're posting pictures of your postcards as you send them out. It's a lot of labor for performance.

Another cisgender participant from Session 6 said hesitation among cisgender allies may stem from concerns about not wanting to speak over TGD voices:

> There's a certain amount of you want to be uplifting the voices of the people who are actually impacted. But I think some people, cis people, white people, etc. It can be easy to say, "Oh, I'm gonna let them speak for themselves; I'll just share their post on social media, and that is me doing my part to amplify their voice." And I think that with many activism opportunities, allies, including themselves, needs to look like actually acting and in a support role. And I think that a lot of people who are in a position of privilege don't know how to subordinate themselves, I suppose; they don't know what allyship looks like.

The distinction between performative allyship, activism, and policy action was clearly expressed across participants who noted activism and policy action require more time and capacity. This was demonstrated by a TGD participant from Session 1 who stated, "Policy action isn't really as visible; people don't really know what you're doing so it's less trendy sort of. . . . You can't fake that in the same way." Although this excerpt is specifically about the difference between policy action and performative allyship, the distinction between activism and policy action was also conveyed across focus groups.

Theme 4: Barriers to Policy Action

Participants noted how policy action requires more time, commitment, capacity, and education compared to activism. Multiple participants expressed that activism focused activities (e.g., showing up at a protest, wearing a pro-TGD t-shirt, or raising awareness about TGD issues through social media) are simpler and more direct. In contrast, policy action, specifically the political system, is complex and confusing. This sentiment was explained by a TGD participant from Session 1:

> I think that there is this idea that the policies are hard to change, or maybe that the policies will never change or the policies are like set up to work against us from the start. And so, it's almost like we can change the hearts and minds of people but changing the policy is the whole other issue. I think it creates a paralyzing effect of people not feeling able to do anything.

Similarly, a cisgender participant from Session 5 jested:

> A lot of folks just can't handle one more thing. And to understand our political system you have to dedicate some brain power, and some frustration, some new cuss words, and, if you don't cuss, that immediately takes you out of it.

A TGD participant from Session 3 said policy action requires a specific temperament, which they do not have. This participant explained:

> I also don't think I have the temperament for it, but, fundamentally, I don't think that's how change happens. So I don't care. It's so low on my priority list. It's lovely when laws line up, but it's also always temporary. It's certainly worth fighting for, and I'm gonna leave that to someone else to do.

The lack of education and knowledge about—and belief in—the political system was expressed multiple times across focus groups indicating low political efficacy. A TGD participant from Session 4 stated, "It takes a lot of effort to keep up with. It also takes a high level of education to even make sense of what the policies are, how they're changing, and how they go through government." The complexity of the political system—paired with the lack of education and access to the political system—creates cynicism of the political system. The cynicism of participants about the political system influenced their perception of elected officials and those in political power. One cisgender participant from Session 6 said this:

> I do have very little faith on them driving any real, sustainable change. I think the change has to come from us, from the community directly or from us allies. And we have to teach them. They have to be trained. I think that's the only way for me; that's what explains very little hope that they will be able to drive anything meaningful for the general public.

Even among those with knowledge about the political system, most participants did not believe the political system worked for them. This was aptly expressed by a TGD participant from Session 3:

> A lot of us are disillusioned. I don't know a single Black person who believes the system works for them. I don't know anybody who really isn't white and incredibly rich, and cis and heterosexual who believes that the system works for them. It's hard to feel like you can really effect change in a system that seems to be stacked against you. So we just kind of give up.

Participants across focus groups also discussed the role of geographic region as a barrier for policy action. Some participants mentioned safety as an out TGD person and the potential of physical or emotional harm through violence or doxing. One cisgender participant from Session 5 summarized it this way: "[In most states], I feel like to be an out trans or nonbinary person is already very radical."

In contrast, some participants discussed how a sense of safety due to progressive politics in a state could lead to apathy or disengagement in policy action. One TGD participant from Session 2 said, *"*In the Northeast, I think people sometimes are less likely to engage in the political process because they already assume they have rights, and that no one's ever going to take them away.*"*

When discussing safety and the potential dangers of policy action, participants mentioned how, especially in rural areas or conservative states, having "passing privilege" or being perceived as a cisgender person in public could either motivate someone to participate in policy action to maintain their rights or could affect apathy. A TGD participant from Session 1 explained:

> There is a possibility of passing. There's safety in that, and I guess with the laws, I think it's easier to say, if I'm a binary trans man, I could say, "I've transitioned to the extent that I want to transition and I pass, and I'm good so these laws aren't gonna effect me as much." I've heard that there's this tendency to distance oneself from the trans community once that happens.

For rural participants, there was limited access to state capitals, social movement organizations, and other TGD individuals. In discussing limited access to knowing how to get involved in policy action among rural TGD individuals, a TGD participant from Session 4 stated:

> I end up talking to a lot of trans people in rural areas who are like, "I don't have any community connectedness. I don't know any other trans people, there's nobody in my region, there's no like support groups. There's no social groups. I'm only connected to the trans community on the Internet."

This lack of access to or visibility of TGD individuals can limit a person's ability to identify resources for policy action.

Theme 5: Social Movement Organizations Reduce Barriers

The role of social movement organizations in engaging individuals in activism, particularly policy action, was expressed across focus groups. Participants discussed how many of the barriers to policy action they experienced were addressed by social movement

organizations. A TGD participant from Session 4 expressed the trustworthiness in the TGD community of social movement organizations as an important distinguisher for involvement:

> Statewide and local organizations and my connection with them helps facilitate my involvement in policy action like those are organizations that have shown they're going to be here for the trans community. They don't think of sticking up for the trans community as sort of icing on the cake of their real work of sticking up for cis LGB people. So I think having that involvement with organizations where they show themselves repeatedly to be trustworthy on an organizational level really strengthens and continues that cycle of "Okay, I trust this organization so I trust that it matters that I show up on this."

A TGD participant from Session 3 provided some context on the ways social movement organizations build that trustworthiness and credibility in the community:

> Give me a place to go, and I will go; give me a direction and give me some letter to write, and I will write it. But if I have to decide what letters to write, I will burn out in weeks, if not less. Whereas, in an organization it diffuses [things] and you actually know other things are going to get done, and you have that trust in the organization, as an authority.

Although the trust of the community is important, participants noted social movement organizations also provide legitimacy and a presence of collective power to decision-makers. As one TGD participant from Session 3 stated:

> Isn't it nice to have letterhead, and a nice official sign with organization names so that you look legit and legible to the people who you're trying to effect change with? That there's no one individual who has to do it. We get to engage in the power of "we."

Participants also expressed that it is time-consuming to stay updated on the fast-paced changes in TGD justice and legislation being introduced, so having paid organizers do that work is helpful and means more people may show up. One cisgender participant from Session 5 noted:

> It takes an organizer. It takes a group to remind them, and people will put their name on every mailing list at a Pride festival. But if they show up and join an organization and that organization says we're doing a thing, they might do a thing. But most people just don't do it themselves.

Participants also discussed how social movement organizations provide material support and training on how to engage in the political arena. A cisgender participant from Session 6 said, "I don't think we know how to do that policy action without some social movement organization like some of that happening, because it is so difficult." Expanding on that, a TGD participant from Session 4 added:

> I feel like often people don't know what to do. They don't know how to participate in a political process. They don't know how to speak out against the bill or whatever. And so, being connected to a social movement organization that can put out explainers and call to action and explain what it means.

Another cisgender participant from Session 6 expanded on specific material support that social movement organizations provide:

> They'll call me. They'll text me. They'll give me a sign up, so I can go into [state capital] and make it easy for me to step up and do the postcards. I can go out and give 25 postcards to various friends because somebody organized it and gave it to me. So it's that filter down process. It's interesting to see how organizations impact me and how I can reach out to others.

Social movement organizations also demonstrate to individuals participating in TGD activism and policy action that they are not doing it in isolation and that there is a community of support behind them. While noting the emotional labor, time, energy, and capacity that goes into policy action, one TGD participant from Session 3 described it like this:

> I feel more desire for activism when I have people I know will pick up the slack. Once I take two steps forward and someone else will take the flag once I pass it off. That doesn't always happen in communities. It definitely happens in social movement organizations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The findings from the Phase 1 survey (N = 954) and Phase 2 focus groups (n = 22) provide context for motivators that influence participation in TGD activism and/or TGD policy action. Table 13 provides an overview of the integration of quantitative and qualitative results and the inferences made in this discussion. The discussion begins by describing demographics from Phase 1 and the context of those demographics explained by participants in Phase 2. In the next section, I consider the differences between TGD activism and policy action by integrating the results from both Phases 1 and 2. In the subsequent section of the discussion, I address each study motivator: (a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, and (c) social movement organization involvement. Discussion of political efficacy will be included in the discussions of the three other motivators.

Table 13

Integration of Explanatory Sequential Findings

Overarching concept	Qualitative results	Qualitative themes	Qualitative quotes	Mixed methods inference
TGD activism and TGD policy action	There is higher participation in activism than policy action.	Barriers to Policy Action Performative Allyship is Not Enough	"Policy action isn't really as visible, people don't really know what you're doing so it's less trendy sort of. "Oh, and I support trans rights, but not really." You can't fake that in the same way." –TGD participant	Activism is easier than policy action and can be performative. There are greater risk and cost concerns for participating in policy action. People are disillusioned with the political system.
	TGD individuals are more likely to participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action compared to cisgender individuals.	Gender Impacts Safety and Access to Participation Skin in the Game	"Until you are confronted with a problem, there's more opportunities to ignore it." –Cisgender participant	TGD people are directly impacted by TGD injustice and have a politicized collective identity. Some cisgender individuals may also develop a politicized collected identity such as a parent of TGD child.
Political salience	Political salience is correlated with TGD activism and TGD policy action	Skin in the Game	"The involvement with like trans issues was not super high until very recently, when we had more awareness of trans people in our churches." - TGD Participant	A personal connection to a TGD individual may influence your personal political salience around TGD justice, motivating an individual to take action.
	Among cisgender participants, political salience is a significant motivator for TGD activism.	Skin in the Game Gender Impacts Safety Access to Participation		In addition to personal connection, having privilege can reduce risks and costs associated with activism

Table 13 (cont'd)

Overarching concept	Qualitative results	Qualitative themes	Qualitative quotes	Mixed methods inference
	Political salience is not a significant motivator for policy action across all genders when other motivators are present.	Barriers to Policy Action Performative Allyship is Not Enough	"A lot of folks just can't handle one more thing. And to understand our political system you have to dedicate some brain power, and some frustration, some new cuss words, if you don't cuss that immediately takes you out of it." – Cisgender Participant	Though individuals may have political salience, their dissillusionment with the system and lack of external political efficacy may influence their participation in policy actiom.
Community connectedness	Community connectedness is correlated with TGD activism and TGD policy action.	Gender Impacts Safety and Access to Participation	"I also think I've been really leaning into this idea of survival and joy as resistance, and so just as somebody who, by virtue of accessing the services and showing up in my community, I think of as a political action." –TGD participant	The desire to protect and show up for your community, despite the expected outcomes, influences an individual's decision to participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action.
	Among nonbinary and cisgender participants, community connectedness is a significant motivator for TGD activism.	Skin in the Game Gender Impacts Safety and Access to Participation	"A lot of the straight trans women I know, feel kind of disconnected from the queer community, just because they're living as straight women. They don't have a lot of the day-to-day experiences we have, especially if they pass. " –TGD participant	Binary transgender individuals may experience passing privilege or be stealth (not out as transgender) and therefore less connected with the broader TGD nad LGBTQ+ community. Whereas for nonbinary individuals, finding affirming and support within the TGD community may hold signficiant importance. For cisgender individuals, their connection to a TGD individual

Table 13 (cont'd)

Overarching concept	Qualitative results	Qualitative themes	Qualitative quotes	Mixed methods inference
				may dictate their overall connection to the TGD community.
	Community connectedness is not a significant motivator for policy action across all genders when other motivators are present.	Barriers to Policy Action Performative Allyship is Not Enough	"If you're performing your activism, you're not writing, you're not taking the time out of your day to write to your Congress member. That's a very invisible type of labor. Even if you're posting pictures of your postcards as you send them out. It's a lot of labor for performance." –TGD participant	Due to the greater risk and costs of participation in policy action as well as the more invisbilizaed work, individuals may be less likely to participate as they can use performative allyship or simple activism gestures as a means to demonstrate their committment to the TGD community.
Social movement organization involvement	Social movement organization involvement is correlated with TGD activism and TGD policy action	Social Movement Organizations Reduce Barriers	"But if they show up and join an organization and that organization says we're doing a thing, they might do a thing. But most people just don't do it themselves." – Cisgender participant	Social movement organizations provide legitimacy and credibility to TGD justice advocacy. They provide the material support individuals needs to participate in TGD activism and TGD policy action.
	Social movement organization involvement is a significant motivator for TGD activism across all genders	Barriers to Policy Action Barriers to Policy Action Performative Allyship is Not Enough Social Movement Organizations Reduce Barriers	"I feel more desire for activism when I have people I know will pick up the slack. Once I take two steps forward and someone else will take the flag once I pass it off. That doesn't always happen in communities. It definitely happens in	Social movement organizations provide a labor and support through organizing events and community engagement that may not otherwise exist or may cause

Table 13 (cont'd)

Overarching concept	Qualitative results	Qualitative themes	Qualitative quotes	Mixed methods inference
			social movement organizations." – TGD participant	individuals to burn out.
	Social movement organization involvement is a significant motivator for TGD policy action across all genders.	Social Movement Organizations Reduce Barriers Barriers to Policy Action Gender Impacts Safety and Access to Participation	"I don't think we know how to do that policy action without some social movement organization like some of that happening, because it is so difficult." –TGD participant	Social movement organizations play a crucial role in bridging the gap in education, training, and access to the political system.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In this section of the discussion, I address the answers to each of the four research questions for Phase 1:

- To what extent do participants participate in various types of TGD activism and policy action?
- Which previously identified civic engagement motivators (i.e., political salience, politicized collective identity, involvement with a social movement organization, and political efficacy) are associated with participating in TGD activism and TGD policy action?
- What is the interconnection between civic engagement motivators to influence participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action? and
- How does the presence of motivators for TGD activism and TGD policy action vary by gender?

The Phase 2 research question asks: How do participant narratives reveal connections and processes between TGD activism, TGD policy action, and the motivators? The discussion of this question is integrated across all aspects of the research question discussion.

Research Question 1

To answer the first research question, I explored the degree to which participants participated in various types of TGD activism and policy action through an integrated discussion of Phases 1 and 2. First, I discuss who participated in TGD activism and TGD policy action. Second, I describe differences between participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action.

Who Participates in TGD Activism and Policy Action?

The second hypothesis stated TGD individuals would be more likely to participate in both TGD activism and TGD policy action than cisgender individuals. Phase 1 results demonstrate that both transgender (H [953] = -6.86, p <.001) and nonbinary (H [952] = -4.10, p <.001) individuals have significantly higher TGD activism scores compared to cisgender participants. Similarly, transgender (H [952] = -4.10, p <.001) and nonbinary (H [952] = 4.14, p <.001) individuals have significantly higher TGD policy action scores compared to cisgender participants. Thus, Phase 1 results support Hypothesis 2.

These results were unsurprising to focus group participants, indicating TGD individuals have “skin in the game” and, therefore, have more to lose by not participating in activism or policy action. Studies have found LGBTQ+ adults are more likely to participate in LGBTQ+ related activism compared to heterosexual and cisgender adults (Holloway et al., 2022; Swank, 2018), and TGD youth are more likely to participate in general activism compared to cisgender youth (Frost et al., 2019). In other words, focus group participants identified that TGD

individuals have a politicized collective identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001) that likely leads to participation in activism and policy action.

Phase 1 survey results indicated bisexual, pansexual, gay, lesbian, queer, and individuals with multiple sexual orientations were more likely to participate in activism compared to straight individuals. Additionally, those who identify as multiple sexual orientations were more likely to participate in policy action compared to straight individuals. As one focus group participant expressed not being connected to the broader LGBTQ+ community as a straight TGD person may translate to less opportunity or desire to engage in activism and policy action. LGBQ+ cisgender individuals may feel a broader politicized collective identity (Montagno et al., 2021; Swank, 2018; Swank & Fahs, 2016) shared with TGD individuals.

Those people with an annual income of $49,999 or less were less likely to participate in both activism and policy action. This may be attributed to access barriers among lower-income survey participants such a transportation and time. The qualitative data also suggest, in such politically hostile and vitriol times, some TGD individuals are burned out, focused on survival (e.g., housing, food, and safety), and do not have capacity for taking action for TGD justice. Burnout has been identified as a major barrier toward activism and policy action around racial justice (Danquah et al., 2021; Gorski, 2019a, 2019b) and may be connected to ongoing experiences of minority stress (Breslow et al., 2015; Frost et al., 2019; Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Meyer, 2015), particularly for those who are multiply marginalized.

Although geographic region, education, and racial identity did not significantly predict TGD activism or TGD policy action involvement in Phase 1 of this study, focus groups participants identified having multiple marginalized identities influences participation in activism and policy action, aligning with extant literature (Curtin et al., 2016; Schmitz et al.,

2022). This finding may suggest an important aspect of participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action is assessing the cost and risk (McAdam, 1986), which may vary by both the activity itself and based on individual sociodemographic factors (e.g., racial identity, location, income, and citizenship status). According to McAdam (1986), assessment of participation depends on the cost of the "time, money, and energy" and risk of the "legal, social, physical, or financial dangers" required for participating in a form of activism (p. 67). Phase 2 participants discussed it may be safer for White individuals to participate in TGD activism and particularly TGD policy action compared to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, regardless of gender identity aligning with the various costs and risk associated with TGD activism and TGD policy action dependent upon having multiple marginalized identities.

Phase 2 participants also discussed the role geographic region may play as a major determinant for access to or safety for participation based on political party designation of those states. At the time of this study, the strictest and most limiting anti-TGD policies were in conservative states like Florida, Texas, and Tennessee, and research has demonstrated the ongoing negative emotional impact of these policies on TGD individuals and allies (Abreu et al., 2021, 2022; Flaskerud & Lesser, 2018; Hughes et al., 2021; Hughto et al., 2021; Kidd et al., 2021). Further, some TGD individuals and families have fled conservative states to seek refuge in more progressive TGD-affirming states (Ernst, 2022; Yarvis, 2022). Some participants also discussed living in a more progressive state can lead to apathy because there may be an assumption that TGD rights are safe and protected in those states. Although little extant research exists on political apathy in the United States, one qualitative study based in Russia found being dissociated with politics may contribute to political apathy (Zhelnina, 2020). In this sense, individuals who live in progressive states can dissociate from the anti-TGD political climate

across the United States and not feel compelled to take action due to the perception that it will not directly affect them.

Phase 1 results indicated those who have a disability were more likely to participate in activism and policy action compared to those who do not have a disability. This may be due to disabled participants having more experience with activism and policy action for addressing ableism (H. McCarthy, 2021). Some disabled participants from Phase 2 discussed the salience of their disability as an advocate for TGD justice in terms of their safety showing up to protests or events. Further, both TGD justice and disability justice are rooted in a foundational right to bodily autonomy (Baril et al., 2020; Slater & Liddiard, 2018).

Another demonstration of how disability and TGD lived experiences are intertwined is prior to enumerated gender identity nondiscrimination protections in some states within the United States, disability law was used to protect TGD rights due to medicalization of both disabled and TGD bodies and experiences (Chung, 2011). Yet, the Americans With Disabilities Act specifically excluded gender dysphoria from disability protections at the federal level (Barry, 2013) until a landmark regional court decision in 2014 supported by the U.S. Department of Justice (Payne, 2018). Many focus group participants pointed out TGD justice must be intersectional with other justice movements because liberation for TGD individuals is interconnected with racial justice, disability justice, environmental justice, and many other forms of justice.

Unsurprisingly, the Phase 1 survey revealed those who have a progressive political ideology were more likely than those with moderate or conservative political ideologies to participate in activism. Christians were less likely to participate in activism compared to those who had religious beliefs that were agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular. These results are

not surprising due to much of the current antitrans rhetoric stemming from White, Christian conservatives in the United States (Crasnow, 2021). However, in Phase 2, individuals who identify as Unitarian Universalists, which has Christian roots but is considered a secular religion, discussed the role of their church community for engaging in broader activism and policy action as well as building support for TGD activism and TGD policy action. Though Judaism was not discussed in Phase 2, Phase 1 results indicated those who are Jewish were more likely than those who had religious beliefs that were agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular to participate in policy action. This may be attributed to holding multiple marginalized identities or a shared experience of oppression where various types of activism and policy action are necessary to gain or maintain human rights.

TGD Activism Versus TGD Policy Action

Findings suggests the nuance and complexity of gender influences participation in activism and policy action, though participation in activism is more likely than policy action regardless of gender. This finding supports Hypothesis 1 (i.e., there is a higher rate of participation in TGD activism compared to TGD policy action). Phase 1 results demonstrate there was significantly higher participation in TGD activism compared to TGD policy action (t [949] = 87.38, $p < .001$).

Participants were more apt to engage in activism than policy action, as activism activities such as posting on social media; wearing or displaying supportive messages on oneself; or participating in a protest, educational event, or demonstration are more accessible and direct. In contrast, policy action or engaging in the political process has a plethora of barriers undergirded by a lack of education and training related to how the political system works and how to participate in it and the complicated, time-consuming, and laborious process of policy action.

This indicates that there is generally low political efficacy around TGD justice. Extant literature supports Phase 2 participants' explanations regarding the increasingly less substantial education, training, and information about the political process through the gutting of civics education in schools (Baumann & Brennan, 2017; Shapiro & Brown, 2018). However, the lack of education and training was just one barrier for policy action participation. Other barriers identified by focus group participants included time, capacity, safety considerations, geographic region, and not believing in the political system.

The fourth hypothesis was compared to other motivators, political efficacy would have the strongest association with participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action. Due to poor measurement fit in this study, political efficacy was dropped from the SEM model and from the analysis. However, Phase 1 results indicate social movement organization involvement had the strongest association with participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action across genders (refer to Table 11 and Table 12). This finding may be due to the disillusionment with the political system moving individuals to more direct actions that fall into the activism category than participating in the complexity and nuance of the political process that are more closely align with policy action. This sentiment, as expressed by focus group participants, does not align with existing literature that suggests internal political efficacy does influence participation in activism and policy action (Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016). This lack of belief in the political system, regardless of a person's understanding of it, may also have influenced the quantitative results for political efficacy, both internal and external, that required dropping this variable from the analysis.

Focus group participants expressed concerns and frustrations with the activism being conflated with performative allyship or slacktivism (Cabrera et al., 2017), particularly as it

relates to social media. Participants expressed there was more to "showing up" for TGD justice than doing the bare minimum (e.g., sharing a post on social media, using correct names and pronouns for TGD people, or wearing a rainbow during Pride month). Although there is a spectrum of engagement in activism that may lead into policy action, participants were clear taking action for TGD justice needed to be consistent and thoughtful, and TGD individuals should not be expected to do all the work themselves. These concepts of what goes beyond performative allyship align with a study exploring social media allyship for Black Lives Matter in the summer of 2020 (Wellman, 2022). Wellman (2022) found what separates performative allyship from activism is a person's credibility, authenticity, transparency, and trustworthiness. TGD participants in Phase 2 confirmed these findings, asking cisgender allies to "show up" fully and indubitably in meaningful ways, while also acknowledging that there must be a certain level or empathy or connection to TGD justice required for them to do so.

Research Questions 2, 3, and 4

In this next section, I address the remaining research questions: (a) Which previously identified civic engagement motivators (i.e., political salience, politicized collective identity, involvement with a social movement organization, and political efficacy) are associated with participating in TGD activism and policy action?, (b) What is the interconnection between civic engagement motivators to influence participation in TGD activism and policy action?, and (c) How does the presence of motivators for TGD activism and policy action vary by gender? In this section, I also discuss the third hypotheses, in which I examine whether higher scores on motivators, overall, were linked to a greater likelihood of participation in TGD activism and policy action.

Although political efficacy was dropped from the analysis, Spearman's rank correlations showed significant positive associations between motivators (i.e., political salience, community connectedness, and social movement organization involvement) and TGD activism and TGD policy action (see Table 10). In this section, I also examine the integration of results from Phases 1 and 2 through the lenses of (a) political salience, (b) community connectedness, and (c) social movement organization involvement. Discussion about political efficacy is embedded in discussion of other motivators due to the exclusion of political efficacy in the statistical analysis.

Political Salience

In Phase 1, I found political salience is a significant motivator for cisgender individuals to participate in activism but not policy action when compared to community connectedness and social movement organization involvement. Among the sample in Phase 1, 60% of cisgender participants knew a TGD person, which supports extant literature that demonstrates more exposure to TGD individuals reduces transphobia (Flores et al., 2018; Parker et al., 2022). Focus group participants discussed the crucial role of building empathy and humanizing the TGD community as part of activism and policy action. Findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 agreed cisgender participants who know a TGD person were more likely to participate in activism and policy action compared to a cisgender participant who did not know a TGD person. That exposure to TGD individuals may change hearts and minds by building empathy for TGD individuals.

For cisgender participants, having empathy for TGD individuals was likely developed from their relationship with a TGD person and, in turn, motivated the actions they took toward TGD justice out of concern for their TGD loved one's well-being. That personal connection can evolve into political salience (Duncan & Stewart, 2007; Jones & Becker, 2023). In contrast, TGD

focus group participants described how political salience was more inherent to their lived experiences as TGD individuals directly impacted and, therefore, not a motivating factor. Moreover, the sentiment toward fear and concerns of losing rights or maintaining currents rights was shared across the TGD focus groups, indicating TGD participants felt they were on the defense rather than offense, likely increasing scores for political salience among TGD participants.

Community Connectedness

Community connectedness was a key motivator for cisgender and nonbinary individuals to participate in activism but not policy action. For cisgender participants, this motivation may be due to their connection to a TGD person (e.g., a familial or romantic relationship). Focus group participants discussed how political salience and community connectedness may be synergetic for participants. This synergy was demonstrated by cisgender participants in Phase 2 who explained how their empathy and compassion toward TGD justice was rooted in their connection to their TGD loved one. This finding demonstrates how this sense of community connection blurs the lines between the personal and political for cisgender participants developing their political salience toward TGD justice in ways that are omnipresent for TGD participants.

Cisgender participants may also develop their own politicized collective identity through their relationship to a TGD person. Particularly, parents of TGD children have been targeted in the legislation and antitrans policies that criminalize parents for providing gender-affirming care, participation in sports, gender-affirming books, and attending drag show performances (Berlatsky, 2023), making parents of TGD children a highly-politicized demographic in the United States. Some TGD focus group participants were skeptical of cisgender survey participants' feeling a sense of belonging to the TGD community. However, other TGD

participants discussed the role of social movement organizations as representations of the community.

The synergy between political salience and community connectedness among TGD participants in Phase 2 was discussed within the context of why they participate in TGD activism or policy action or, rather, for whom they are "showing up." Across all Phase 2 participants, much of the narrative behind their activism or policy action was around humanization of TGD individuals. However, this narrative was particularly pervasive for TGD participants in a way that is not represented in extant literature. Although many participants expressed grave concern for the future of TGD justice, they indicated "winning" was not their primary motivation. Their motivation was centered on "showing up" on behalf of other TGD people who may not be able to participate in TGD activism and policy action in the same way due to safety or access concerns.

Some participants expressed the desire to improve the lives of TGD youth or future generations of TGD individuals. Other motivations were due to the many TGD lives lost due to hate, discrimination, or violence—or the manifestation of experiencing ongoing gender minority stress (Hendricks & Testa, 2012) leading to mental health and substance use disparities, including dying by suicide (Johns et al., 2019; Kattari, Hill, et al., 2022; Testa et al., 2017). For these participants, community connectedness extended beyond concrete relationships and constructed a deeper community connection through shared resistance to and resilience of navigating transphobia at all levels of society. This form of community connectedness created hope that was not centered on short-term wins or policy changes but a future of liberation.

Phase 1 findings affirm community connectedness was a motivator for activism among nonbinary participants but not for transgender participants. Focus group participants attributed

this difference to the concept of passing privilege or being perceived as a cisgender person in public. Some focus groups members discussed how binary transgender individuals may be stealth or not out as transgender in all or many aspects of their lives and, therefore, have disengaged from the TGD community. One focus group participant mentioned, in the 1980s and 1990s, it was considered a best practice for clinicians to require transgender patients to disconnect from the transgender community after medically transitioning. Other focus group participants discussed due to the politicized collective identity of being TGD, community connectedness was not a necessary motivation to take action for TGD justice; hence, having "skin in the game" was motivation enough.

Similarly, participants discussed passing privilege for nonbinary individuals who may pass as cisgender. However, many focus group participants considered nonbinary individuals have additional barriers in navigating repeatedly outing themselves whether because they are visibly "gender nonconforming" or because they "pass" as cisgender and, yet, must constantly correct others about their pronouns or be misgendered. Whether experiencing passing privilege or not, community connectedness may be an arena of affirmation and validation for nonbinary individuals. For those visibly nonbinary, being connected to the community may also be a means of safety as well as support. This safety and support from community connectedness may build the resilience of nonbinary individuals (Bowling et al., 2020), which can lead to participation in activism and policy action (Bockting et al., 2019). Some focus group participants discussed the novelty of the concept of nonbinary; therefore, community connection provides emotional support for the challenges nonbinary individuals may face that binary transgender individuals do not, or no longer, experience as they identify within the gender binary and can be "stealth" yet still affirmed in public.

Social Movement Organization Involvement

Phase 1 findings confirm social movement organization involvement was a significant motivator across all genders for both activism and the only significant motivator for policy action. Phase 2 participants conjectured social movement organizations play a pivotal role in connecting individuals to the community by (a) bridging the gap in education and training, (b) providing material support for participation, and (c) legitimizing the TGD justice movement. Consistently across Phase 2 sessions, participants mentioned the role social movement organizations play in building the political efficacy of individuals. These conversations primarily focused on the training received from social movement organizations that provided skill-building and technical assistance on subjects (e.g., how a bill becomes a law, how to contact elected officials, and story-telling or testimony building).

Focus group participants also discussed their reliance on social movement organizations for leading the burdensome process of (a) tracking legislation or policies, (b) providing templates or scripts for contacting elected officials, and (c) organizing events (e.g., lobby day) that put constituents directly in front of elected officials. Phase 2 participants often referenced the efficient and effective nature inherent to the professionalization of this type of community organizing work because it is time extensive and consuming for any one individual to do, especially in the current political climate in which hundreds of proposed antitrans laws were introduced in 2023 (Trans Legislation Tracker, n.d.). Phase 2 participants mentioned because social movement organizations did the groundwork, they could simply show up for an event or fill in a form to send email to an elected-official, therefore encouraging and simplifying participation in policy action.

This role social movement organizations play, according to Phase 2 participants, aligns with the Klanderman's (1984) mobilization and participation theory in which social movements are moving individuals from concern about a social problem to participating in the solution. However, extant literature does not make distinctions between activism and policy action and often uses collective action or sociopolitical involvement as a catch all (Battle & Harris, 2013a, 2013b; Chan & Mak, 2020; Han, 2016; Harris et al., 2013, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Isaac et al., 2020; Swank & Fahs, 2016). This study confirms social movement organizations play a role in mobilizing individuals toward TGD activism; moreover, these organizations are fundamental to engaging individuals in the political process.

Phase 2 participants speculated social movement organizations provide legitimacy and credibility within the TGD community with elected-officials, and with the general public. Some focus group participants described the relationships social movement organizations have with well-connected political players or directly with elected officials that help move or block legislation or policies. Many Phase 2 participants also suggested state-wide LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations (e.g., One Colorado) are perceived as more trustworthy than many of the national advocacy organizations (e.g., Human Rights Campaign) due to historical transphobic rifts that have existed within the broader LGBTQ+ movement (Beemyn, 2021). According to focus group participants, these local advocacy organizations are perceived to be committed to (a) working within diverse TGD communities, (b) addressing and repairing past harms, (c) building cross-movement solidarity, and (d) focusing the work on impacted communities.

Significance of the Research

This study is the first of its kind to explore and explain motivators for engaging in TGD activism and TGD policy action with a convenience sample of cisgender and TGD individuals in

the United States. According to the Pew Research Center, 64% of adults in the United States support nondiscrimination protections for TGD individuals, and 36% said society has not gone far enough in accepting TGD individuals (Parker et al., 2022). According to the "3.5% rule," a revolution will be successful once 3.5% of a population actively participates in civil resistance (Chenoweth, 2021). This study demonstrates formal and informal mechanisms are currently at play that can move those 64% of adults in the United States who support TGD individuals through a spectrum of activities related to TGD activism and TGD policy action.

Further, these strategies can also build momentum for collective nonviolent civil resistance toward the growing anti-TGD movement in the United States through the prioritization of engaging current allies and supporters. As Solnit (2018) posited, "preaching to the choir" is where the focus of social movement work must be rather than focusing on changing the hearts and minds solely of the opposition. According to Solnit (2018), "You don't need everyone to agree with you; you just need some people to agree so passionately they will donate, campaign, march, risk arrest or injury, possibly prison or death" (p. 75). When considering the popular support for TGD justice in the general public (Parker et al., 2022), "preaching to the choir" who support TGD justice is the target social movement organizations should have to move toward that 3.5% of active participation for TGD justice that could possibly lead to TGD liberation (Chenoweth, 2021; Solnit, 2018).

Further, all credible professional health and wellness associations, including the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), support TGD justice and have statements supporting TGD-affirming policies and practices in health care, health coverage, modernizing gender-affirming documents, ensuring access to gender affirming facilities (e.g., restrooms, lodging, locker rooms, shelters, and prisons) and endorsing protection from discrimination for all TGD

adults and youth (Lambda Legal, 2018). Additionally, the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) requires social work students to gain competency in the areas of diversity and inclusion, as well as human rights and social justice, to integrate into their social work practice. Social work students are also expected to have competency in policy practice, developing their own civic engagement knowledge and skills (CSWE, 2015). Similarly, the NASW Code of Ethics (2017) stated social workers have the responsibility to participate (and encourage the participation of others) in social and political action that promotes social justice. Considering these educational and professional requirements, social workers must be equipped to promote TGD justice in their practice by using various forms of activism and policy action. Expressed in this way, the field of social work has the responsibility to advance social justice and political participation in alignment with activism and policy action related to TGD justice.

Literature demonstrates that the anti-TGD political climate can negatively impact the health and well-being of TGD individuals, specifically when laws and policies impede daily lives (Hughto et al., 2021; Meyer, 2003; Paceley et al., 2017, 2020). This outcome of negative mental health impacts from a vitriolic political climate against TGD individuals aligns with the minority stress model (Meyer, 2003). Social workers are uniquely positioned to support TGD clients and communities to navigate and buffer these effects.

Extant literature has suggested activism and policy action participation can improve an individual's confidence and self-efficacy and may lead to positive mental health outcomes (Chan & Mak, 2020; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Unger, 2000). Future research could examine the effects of TGD activism and TGD policy action as a protective factor, offsetting the negative impacts of the anti-TGD political climate. Regardless of the level of practice, social work practitioners can use and promote the outcomes of civic engagement that foster empowerment, resilience, and

efficacy while playing a critical role in linking individuals and communities to TGD civic engagement activities.

A central role of the field of social work is to advance equity and justice. However, this study found there is a lack of education and training about policy action and participation in the political system. Civic education is a crucial component for individuals in the United States to (a) understand the policy-making process, (b) identify methods in which they can engage in the process, and (c) feel confident in their skills to participate in the process—not just to advance TGD justice but to promote justice and equity in all its forms (Educating for Democracy, 2021). Federal legislation called the Civics Secures Democracy Act (2021) is one attempt to address the gap in civic education in the United States and is one primary way to advance policy related to TGD justice. Yet, this federal legislation has been pending for 2 years. Statewide bills advancing civic education legislation have gained momentum in state legislatures across the country (Vasilogambros, 2021). For example, Indiana and New Jersey passed laws expanding civic education to middle school curricula in 2021; however, Florida's state legislature passed a similar bill that same year that was vetoed by the governor (Ayen, 2021; Vasilogambros, 2021). Noting the limitations of relying on federal and state policy change, an Educating for Democracy report (2021) encourages community-wide grassroots efforts that emphasize partnership with local school districts and tribal-level education boards to adopt comprehensive civic education requirements for K–12 schools.

Social movement organizations are a crucial component of these community-wide grassroots efforts to advance civic education. Yet, the social movement organizations that do political work (e.g., lobbying, campaigning, or focusing on perceived partisan issues like TGD justice) are often excluded from receiving federal, state, and local government funds due to their

501(c)(4) status (Aprill, 2018). These exclusions also extend to many private and public foundations due to the lack of tax write-offs that disincentivize funding 501(c)(4) organizations. These exclusions make it more difficult for social movement organizations to sustain themselves financially over time. In lieu of financial policy supporting the social welfare work of 501(c)(4) social movement organizations, governmental funds should be stewarded to social movement organizations with 501(c)(3) status that priortize civic education in their mission to bridge the gap. Additionally, publicly funded scholarships and apprenticeships should be available to bachelors and masters level social work students interested in civic engagement and civic education careers similar to the funds available to social work students interested in child welfare and gerontology. This bolsters the workforce not just for advancing equity and justice but for ensuring the civic education gap discussed in this study is addressed.

In addition to the significance for social work practice and policy, future research can examine the relationship between political salience and community connectedness as it relates to participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action. Similarly, further exploration of the relationship between social movement organizations and political efficacy is necessary. Such scholarship could lead to creating an evidence base for TGD social movement organizations in building political efficacy and self-efficacy among TGD individuals, both youth and adults. This type of research could include evaluating the effectiveness—in partnership with social movement organizations—of current trainings, workshops, and curricula that build both the hard and soft skills of participating in policy action. These evaluations could emerge into an intervention meant to build the political efficacy and self-efficacy of TGD communities ensuring those with multiple marginalized identities have access to participate. Such an intervention could

examine the effects of participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action on mental health or if it performs as a protective factor for buffering the effects of the political climate.

Findings from this study demonstrate the potential to shape in unique ways the skills and strategies used by social workers, organizers, and other community leaders to progress TGD justice at local, state, and national levels through providing insight on what motivates various individuals to engage in TGD activism and policy action. This insight can inform participation and mobilization activities that build upon and strengthen the motivators of political salience, community connectedness, and, most profoundly, social movement organization involvement to increase the likeliness of participation in TGD activism and policy action.

Limitations

This study did not come without limitations, and caution should be used when interpreting these results. First, Phase 1 was a cross-sectional survey capturing the motivations and participation in TGD activism and policy action at one point in time and was based on self-reported reflections of participants. The constructs of latent variables for TGD activism, TGD policy action, TGD political salience, TGD community connectedness, and TGD social movement organization involvement were developed a priori or based on literature and theory. The political efficacy scale used in this research was previously validated and was not adapted; yet, it yielded ambiguous results in this sample. Though initial testing demonstrated adequacy in reliability, more reliability and validity testing of these measures should be done across all constructs. Further, this study looked solely at direct effects between motivators and TGD activism and TGD policy action. Future research should explore possible indirect effects including mediators and moderators for participation. Additionally, the sample in Phase 1 was predominately White; progressive; highly educated; urban/suburban; and agnostic, atheist, or

nothing in particular. Future research should ensure diversity of participation across various racial, religious, educational, geographic, and political backgrounds.

The landscape of TGD justice changed drastically between Phase 1 and Phase 2 with anti-TGD legislation and policy being introduced and passed at state and local levels. The timing of Phase 1 (November/December 2022) and Phase 2 (June 2023), the volatile political landscape, and other concerns may have influenced how participants answered both survey and focus group questions compared to how they may respond in the future. The timing and political landscape may have contributed to the overall low number of participants in Phase 2. Additionally, the lack of demographic data collection in Phase 2 may have contributed to missing context of participant narratives unless that information was volunteered by the participant during the focus group.

Lastly, participants in this study were 18 years of age or older. Motivations and experiences around TGD activism and TGD policy action may be distinct for generation alpha compared to older generations. Future research should explore motivations for TGD activism and policy action with youth.

Conclusion

Through this sequential-explanatory mixed methods research, I sought to explore and understand the prevalence and motivations for TGD activism and TGD policy action in the United States. Though extant literature has explored activism and, limitedly, policy action on other justice issues (e.g., racial justice, women's justice, and environmental justice), TGD justice is an understudied area of inquiry.

Throughout the integration of Phase 1 and Phase 2 results, the social identity model of collection action (SIMCA) and mobilization and participation theory were operationalized. The current study provides a distinction between TGD activism and TGD policy action. This novel

approach found, although SIMCA can be a framework used to understand motivations toward TGD activism, the psychological motivations of political salience and community connectedness wane in comparison to the influence of social movement organizations on TGD activism and primarily on TGD policy action.

This is a timely and relevant study amid the wave of a powerful anti-TGD countermovement across the United States. First, the findings from this study demonstrate the importance of TGD justice work that builds empathy through the humanization of TGD individuals and communities to develop political salience among cisgender allies. Second, it is crucial that a sense of community connectedness is ubiquitous, particularly for nonbinary and cisgender advocates, to prevent isolation and burnout as discussed by Phase 2 participants. Third, social movement organizations focused on TGD justice must be recognized, supported, and funded for their imperative of mobilizing TGD and cisgender individuals into taking action for TGD justice. This study identified the function of social movement organizations at the juncture of decision making for participation in TGD policy action. Moreover, in a time of great apathy and compassion fatigue, social movement organizations have the potential to connect the dots between hope and action among individuals who believe in TGD justice.

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APPENDIX A: PHASE ONE CONSENT FORM AND SURVEY ITEMS

Research Participant Information and Consent Form
Title: Motivators for Transgender and Gender Diverse Related Activism and Policy Action in the United States
Researcher and Title: Leo Kattari, PhD Candidate
Department and Institution: Michigan State University School of Social Work
Contact Information: xxxxxxx@msu.edu
MSU Study ID: STUDY00008375

BRIEF SUMMARY
You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation including why you might or might not want to participate, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to discuss and ask the researchers any questions you may have.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH
The purpose of this study is to identify the prevalence of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) related activism and policy action as well as what motivates participation in TGD activism and policy action.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO
You are being asked to participate in a survey about your experiences with transgender and gender diverse (TGD) related activism or policy action. You will be asked questions about the types of activism and policy action you have participated in, if any, and what may have motivated you to participate. Your participation in this study will take about 15 minutes. ***Upon completion of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview and asked to provide contact information in a separate link that will not be associated with your responses to the original survey.***

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to guiding the creations of strategies and initiatives for community mobilization and organizing that engage individuals to participate in various TGD related activism and policy action that support and defend TGD justice.

POTENTIAL RISKS
There is minimal risk of participating in this study, however, you may experience emotional discomfort responding to questions related to activism, political action, and transgender inclusive behavior. However, this likely would not be different than day-to-day experiences of living in a transphobic and cis-centric society.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY
This survey is anonymous and will not collect any identifying personal information. However, upon completion of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested to participate in a follow-

up interview and asked to provide contact information in a separate link that will not be associated with your responses to the original survey.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW
Participation is voluntary, you may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse participate or discontinue your participation, or not answer or skip any question at any time without consequence.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY
You will not be compensated for your time participating in this study.

RESEARCH RESULTS
The results from this research study will be used to inform Leo Kattari's dissertation. Anonymous and aggregated results may be distributed to individuals or organizations that work toward TGD justice and are interested in using these results to inform strategies for community engagement around TGD activism and policy action.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher Leo Kattari by email at kattaril@msu.edu, regular mail at 655 Auditorium Rd., #245, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at xxx-xxx-xxxx, Fax xxx-xxx-xxxx, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

By clicking YES below, you are confirming you are at least 18 years old and consenting to participate in this study.

- Yes, I CONSENT (1)
- No, I DO NOT CONSENT (2)

1. In which state do you currently reside?

▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

2. Do you believe that transgender and gender diverse people deserve equal rights in the United States?
    - Yes
    - No
3. What is your current age (in whole numbers)?
4. What year were you born (yyyy)?
5. What is your current gender identity (select all that apply)?
    - Woman
    - Female
    - Trans Feminine

- Trans Woman
- Man
- Male
- Trans Masculine
- Trans Man
- Nonbinary
- Gender Queer
- Gender Fluid
- Agender
- Another gender not listed here, please fill in

6. Due to limitations in working with quantitative data, this next question is being asked so that you choose what broader gender term best describes you. Which one **BEST** describes your current gender?

- Transgender, trans, transsexual, a trans man, a trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine, or a person of transgender experience
- Nonbinary, gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender queer, gender creative, agender, or another expansive gender
- Cisgender or someone who is NOT transgender, nonbinary, or gender diverse

7. What is your current sexual orientation (select all the apply)?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Heterosexual or Straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Another sexual orientation not listed here, please fill in

8. Which **best** describes your <u>current</u> relationship status?

- Casually dating
- Divorced
- Partnered with multiple people
- Partnered with one person (NO legal recognition)
- Partnered with one person (WITH legal recognition such as a marriage or a domestic partnership)
- Single
- Widowed

9. What is your current racial identity (select all that apply)?
Black or African American

- Chinese
- Cuban
- Filipino

- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Indigenous (American Indian/Alaska Native)
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latinx/Latine
- Mexican or Chicano/a/x
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Native Hawaiian
- Other Pacific Islander
- Puerto Rican
- Samoan
- South Asian
- Vietnamese
- White
- Another racial identity not listed here, please fill in

10. What is your approximate annual household income?
    - Less than $10,000
    - $10,000 - $19,999
    - $20,000 - $29,999
    - $30,000 - $39,999
    - $40,000 - $49,999
    - $50,000 - $59,999
    - $60,000 - $69,999
    - $70,000 - $79,999
    - $80,000 - $89,999
    - $90,000 - $99,999
    - $100,000 - $149,999
    - More than $150,000

11. What is your highest level of education completed?
    - I did not finish high school
    - High School Diploma or GED
    - Some College
    - Associate's or Vocational Degree
    - Bachelor's Degree
    - Graduate Degree

12. What is your current professional affiliation (if any)?
    - Education (K-12)
    - For-Profit Business
    - Government
    - Higher Education

- Non-Profit
- Politician/Elected Official
- Retired
- Student
- Something else, please fill in

13. How do you best describe the community where you currently live?
    - A City
    - A Suburb
    - A Small Town
    - A Rural Area

14. Do you have a disability, impairment, medical condition, chronic illness, or identify as disabled?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Prefer Not to Answer

15. Which of the following best describes your disability(ies), impairment(s), or medical condition(s)? Check all the apply.
    - ADD/ADHD
    - Autistic
    - Blind or Visual Impairment
    - Chronic Illness/Chronic Fatigue
    - Chronic Pain
    - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
    - Learning Disability (such as dyslexia)
    - Mobility Disability/Impairment
    - Neurological Disability/Impairment (such as TBI)
    - Psychiatric or Socioemotional Disability/Impairment (such as depression, anxiety, or BPD)
    - Another disability, impairment or medical condition not listed here: fill in

16. What is your present religion, if any?
    - Agnostic
    - Atheist
    - Buddhist
    - Christian
    - Hindu
    - Jewish
    - Protestant
    - Mormon
    - Muslim
    - Nothing in Particular

- Orthodox such as Greek or Russian
- Roman Catholic
- Something Else

17. How important is religion in your life?
    - Not at all important (1)
    - Slightly important (2)
    - Moderately important (3)
    - Very important (4)
    - Extremely important (5)

18. In general, would you describe your political views as
    - Very Progressive
    - Progressive
    - Moderate
    - Conservative
    - Very Conservative

19. Are you registered to vote?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I don't know
    - I'm not eligible to vote

20. The next four questions are about your beliefs and understanding about government and political affairs. Please indicate whether the following statements never applies (1), seldom applies (2), sometimes applies (3), or most of the time applies to you (4).
    - I take time to understand and assess important political issues.
    - Politicians strive to keep in close touch with the people.
    - I have the confidence to take active part in a discussion about political issues.
    - Politicians care about what ordinary people think.

21. How do you best describe your primary relationship to a transgender or gender diverse (TGD) person (check all that apply)?
    - I am a TGD person
    - I am a partner or spouse of TGD person
    - I am a parent of a TGD person
    - I am a sibling of a TGD person
    - I am an extended family member of a TGD person (such as a grandparent or cousin)
    - I am a close friend of a TGD person
    - I am a colleague of a TGD person
    - I am an acquaintance with a TGD person
    - I do not personally know a TGD person

22. Which of the following direct community support have you provided to TGD individuals in the past year, if any (select all the apply)?

- Mutual aid funds (such as organizing or donating to surgery funds)
- Mutual aid services (such as donating/collecting binders, wigs, make-up, hair clippers, clothing, or other transition-related services/needs)
- Post-surgery care and/or support
- Professional mental health services (as a licensed mental health provider)
- Peer mental health services (such as support group or crisis line volunteer)
- Housing or shelter
- Something else (please fill in)
- I have not provided direct community support in the past year

23. These next seven questions will explore the frequency of your **advocacy and activism** related specifically to transgender and gender diverse (TGD) justice. TGD justice can be defined as equal and equitable rights for TGD individuals in the United States. How often do you participate in the following activities: Never (1) Rarely (2) Occasionally (3) Frequently (4)

- Attend a TGD related advocacy event such as a protest or rally.
- Post or share social media content about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
- Give lectures or talks about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
- Publicly display political messages about the TGD community (such as by wearing a t-shirt, button, flag, or sticker).
- Advocate for TGD inclusive practices in schools, workplaces, community centers, or other establishments such as for a gender-inclusive bathroom.
- Donate to or fundraise money for a TGD justice organization.
- Confront transphobic or gender essentialist comments, jokes, statements, or innuendos.

24. These next seven questions will explore the frequency of your **policy action** related specifically to transgender and gender diverse (TGD) justice. TGD justice can be defined as equal and equitable rights for TGD individuals in the United States. How often do you participate in the following activities: Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4)

- Provide public comment or testimony to advocate for or against TGD-specific legislation or policy at local, state or national levels (state legislature, school board, governmental agency, etc).
- Lobby or engage directly face-to-face with an elected-official about a social or political issue specific to the TGD community.
- Organize political events specific to the TGD community.
- Participate in a TGD policy-related awareness raising such as canvassing, phone/text-banking, or writing an op-ed.
- Send a letter or email about TGD issues to an elected-official.
- Keep track of the views of elected officials regarding TGD rights and justice.
- Vote for elected officials because of their stance on TGD justice.

25. How concerned are you about the following issues: Not at all Concerned (1), Slightly Concerned (2), Somewhat Concerned (3), Moderately Concerned (4), Extremely Concerned (5):

- Access to gender-affirming health care.
- Access to gender inclusive spaces such as restrooms, locker rooms, and other traditionally gender segregated facilities.
- TGD athletes' involvement in sports.
- Anti-bullying or safe school initiatives for TGD students.
- TGD Non-discrimination protections for employment and public accommodations.
- Access to age-appropriate and cultural relevant education material about TGD history and historical figures in schools.

26. I feel connected to the TGD community.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Somewhat Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

27. I feel connected to other individuals who advocate for TGD justice.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Somewhat Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

28. The problems faced by the TGD community are also my problems.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Somewhat Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

29. I feel a bond with TGD people.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Somewhat Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

30. I work or volunteer with an advocacy organization or coalition that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc)

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Somewhat Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Agree (4)

- Strongly Agree (5)

31. My close friends work or volunteer with an advocacy organization or coalition that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc)
    - Never (1)
    - Rarely (2)
    - Occasionally (3)
    - Frequently (4)

32. I closely follow the social media accounts of advocacy organizations or coalitions that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc)
    - Never (1)
    - Rarely (2)
    - Occasionally (3)
    - Frequently (4)

33. I feel connected to advocacy organizations or coalitions that work toward TGD justice (Equality organizations, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ Center, etc).
    - Never (1)
    - Rarely (2)
    - Occasionally (3)
    - Frequently (4)

APPENDIX B: PHASE TWO INTEREST FORM

Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview to further explore motivations and experiences with advocacy, activism, and policy actions related to TGD justice. Your information shared here will not be connected to your survey responses.

1. What is your first name?

2. Which BEST describes your gender?
   - Transgender, trans, transsexual, a trans man, a trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine, or a person of transgender experience
   - Nonbinary, gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender queer, gender creative, agender, or another expansive gender
   - Cisgender or someone who is NOT transgender, nonbinary, or gender diverse

3. Have you ever participated in the following activities related to TGD Justice:
   - Activism: Engaging in activities such as rallies, protests, or resource/information sharing to advance TGD justice.
   - Policy Action: Engaging with elected-officials (such as state legislators or school board members) about TGD justice to influence policy decisions.

4. In one or two sentences, please briefly describe your experiences related to activism and/or policy action related to TGD justice.

5. What is your email address?

6. What is your mobile phone number

7. What is your preferred method of contact?
   - Phone Call
   - Text
   - Email

APPENDIX C: PHASE TWO CONSENT FORM AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Title: Motivators for Transgender and Gender Diverse Related Activism and Policy Action in the United States
Researcher and Title: Leo Kattari, PhD Candidate
Department and Institution: Michigan State University School of Social Work
Contact Information: xxxxxxx@msu.edu
MSU Study ID: STUDY00008375

BRIEF SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

You are being asked to participate in a research study about motivators for participation in transgender and gender diverse (TGD) activism and policy action. This study is being conducted by a PhD candidate at the Michigan State University School of Social Work. The purpose of this study is to identify the prevalence of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) related activism and policy action as well as what motivates participation in TGD activism and policy action.

Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation including why you might or might not want to participate, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to discuss and ask the researchers any questions you may have.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO

You will participate in a recorded 90-minute focus group via videoconference (e.g., zoom) with other individuals who participated in a survey last fall. The survey explored what motivates individuals to participation in transgender and gender diverse related activism and policy action. We will ask you questions that will help us to make sense of the data. You will be presented with survey results and asked to respond to prompts about the data. Your responses will provide a deeper context and meaning to the numbers from the survey. You will be free to skip any question or to leave the focus group at any time. All focus groups will be recorded, which is required for your participation in this research study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to guiding the creations of strategies and initiatives for community mobilization and organizing that engage individuals to participate in various TGD related activism and policy action that support and defend TGD justice.

POTENTIAL RISKS

There is minimal risk of participating in this study, however, you may experience emotional discomfort responding to questions related to activism, political action, and transgender inclusive behavior. However, this likely would not be different than day-to-day experiences of living in a transphobic and cis-centric society.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your privacy and confidentiality are important to us. All information and data being collected will be securely stored on the encrypted MSU OneDrive password-protected cloud. However,

there is a possibility that in the rare chance of a data breach, your identifying information such as your name, email, gender, recorded voice/likeliness, or responses to the screening survey may be disclosed and link your name with your pseudonym and/or, your gender identity, and/or with participation in this study. To minimize the risk of your identifying information being disclosed or linked to the data or study, we will assign you a participant number and use a pseudonym so that your name is not associated with your answers when we look at the data and use it for analysis and reporting. Further, only the doctoral student will have access to the raw data, original transcripts, screening information, and recordings. Additionally, the screening survey, email correspondence, and video/audio recordings of the focus group will be stored separately and destroyed by June 2024. We will keep de-identified transcripts of the focus groups and your signed consent form for up to four years after you participate in the study, these will be also stored separately from each other and other study information.

Identifiers will be removed from the identifiable private information, after such removal, the information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subject or the legally authorized representative.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Participation is voluntary, you may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequence. You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

There are no costs to participating in this study. If you participate in a focus group or interview, you will be given a $30 gift card, after completion, as a thank you for your time.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results from this research study will be used to inform Leo Kattari's dissertation. Anonymous and aggregated data and results may be distributed to individuals or organizations that work toward TGD justice and are interested in using these results to inform strategies for community engagement around TGD activism and policy action.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher Leo Kattari by email at kattaril@msu.edu, regular mail at 655 Auditorium Rd., #245, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at xxx-xxx-xxxx, Fax xxx-xxx-xxxx, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and date this form.

Signature_____

Date: _____

TGD Activism & Policy Action Phase 2:
Focus Group Guide

Welcome
Welcome everyone, my name is Leo Kattari (he/they). I am a PhD candidate at Michigan State University and the purpose of today's focus group is to be part of a participatory analysis of a survey you participated in this past fall. The survey was exploring what motivates individuals to participate in transgender and gender diverse related activism and policy action.

Recording
Today's focus group will be approximately 90 minutes. If you have not participated in a focus group before, this may feel different than a typical interview. I will share data and outcomes from the survey and ask you to respond to questions about what YOU think it means or how it may be similar or different from your own experiences. While you will see me refer to a set of slides and questions throughout our time, today will follow a more informal, conversational approach. In terms of a few logistics, if at any point you need to use the restroom, get a sip of water, or need a break, please meet your needs. Turn off your camera/audio and return when you are ready. Following the focus group, you will receive a $30 gift card for a thank you. You should have the gift card via email within two weeks; if you don't see it, let me know.

Thank You
It's important to honor your time and contribution in advance. I value your input and your time. This focus group format will allow me to have a more in-depth understanding of the results from the survey that can be further described by your experiences, thoughts, and ideas.

Acknowledge Current Political Climate
I understand that the current political climate influences TGD justice in a multitude of ways and may impact our individual health, safety, and overall wellness. If you can no longer participate in this focus group, you may leave at any time by leaving the Zoom room. There will no retaliation if you choose to do so.

Informed Consent
Previously, you signed a consent form stating you were over the age of 18+ and understand that your participation is voluntary, the minimal risks involved, and you may leave the focus group at any time.
[Copy of consent form linked in Zoom chat]

Community Agreements

With that being said, it's important to me that we co-create a space where everyone is recognized as a valued contributor to our dialogue. Though we are only together for a short amount of time today, I want to outline some general expectations related to communication. I trust each of you to foster a space where we can engage in conversation, listen to other's contributions, and speak to our own thoughts/experiences. I want that trust to be reciprocal, so I think it is equally important to see what you can expect from the moderator(s) of today's discussion. Let's take a moment to review the communication agreement.

[Review Slide 2 with Community Agreements]

I want to start by explaining the last bullet point. This means that my role is primarily to listen and help guide dialogue. There may be times where I have to gently interject or re-direct conversation for the purposes of time management and pacing, to explore an important comment, or to make sure we are providing space for equitable contributions.

Space for Questions

What other questions or thoughts do you have?

Recording

If there are no further questions, we are going to start recording our Zoom session now.

Introductions:

In the chat, please share your name, pronouns, and geographic region

Study Overview*[Refer to slide 3]*

The survey you took in the fall sought to explore motivators for participation in TGD activism and policy action toward trans justice. Today is the second phase of this study where YOU will help me make sense of the data. I will present some results to you and ask you to respond to some prompts. Your responses will provide a deeper context and meaning to the numbers from the survey.

Review Basic Survey Demographics

[Refer to slides 4-9]

[Pause for questions]

Now we are going to examine the differences in participation in activism and policy action by gender. Then we are going to look at how motivations look across genders.

Review Definition of Statistical Significance

[Refer to slide 11]

Present Descriptive Data on Gender by Activism & Policy Action (Slide 12)
Now you see a graph that shows the average participation in TGD activism and TGD policy action across genders.

1. What do you think is occurring here and why?
2. Are there any surprises?
3. How do these data align with your experiences?
4. Who or what may contribute to these outcomes that we have observed?

Present Descriptive Data on Gender by Motivators (Slide 13)
Now you see a graph that shows the average presence of a motivator across genders.

1. What do you think is occurring here and why?
2. Are there any surprises?
3. How do these data align with your experiences?
4. Who or what may contribute to these outcomes that we have observed?

Present Inferential Data on Activism and Policy Action (Slides 14-17)
Now I will go through two slides that takes a deeper dive into participation in activism comparing the total sample to [trans/cis/nonbinary] sample.
Ask these prompts after each slide is presented:

1. What do you think is occurring here and why?
2. Are there any surprises?
3. How do these data align with your experiences?
4. Who or what may contribute to these outcomes that we have observed?

Now I will go through two slides that takes a deeper dive into participation in policy action.
Ask these prompts after each slide is presented:

1. What do you think is occurring here and why?
2. Are there any surprises?
3. How do these data align with your experiences?
4. Who or what may contribute to these outcomes that we have observed?

Debrief
Now I will stop sharing my screen so we can all see each other and discuss these survey results further.

1. Do these data resonate with you regarding your decisions to participate in activism or policy action related to TGD justice?
2. What actionable steps do you think can be made based on these data?
3. How can these findings best be disseminated?

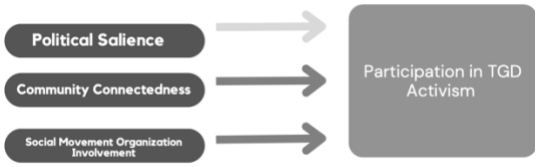
Thank you so much for participating in this focus group. Our discussion will help to better understand the survey results and provide much more robust recommendations on what motivates individuals to participate in TGD activism and policy action.

If anything that came up during this group has made you interested in seeking some personal support, remember that you can always contact https://translifeline.org. They have a hotline you can call and resources on their website.

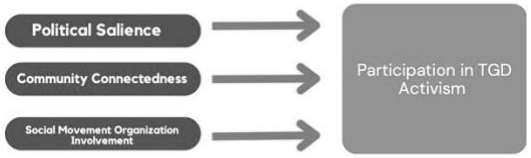
Focus Group Slide Deck

ACTIVISM BY MOTIVATOR: TRANSGENDER PARTICIPANTS

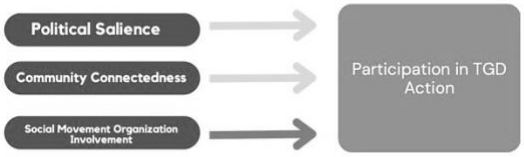
ACTIVISM BY MOTIVATOR: NONBINARY PARTICIPANTS



ACTIVISM BY MOTIVATOR: CISGENDER PARTICIPANTS

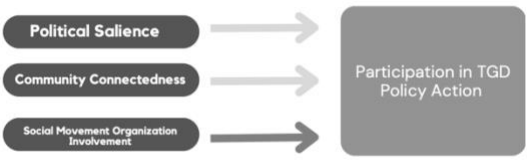


POLICY ACTION BY MOTIVATOR: TOTAL SAMPLE

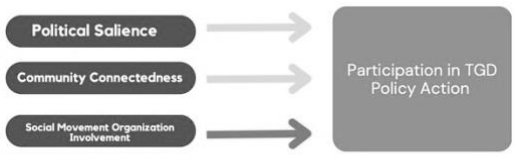
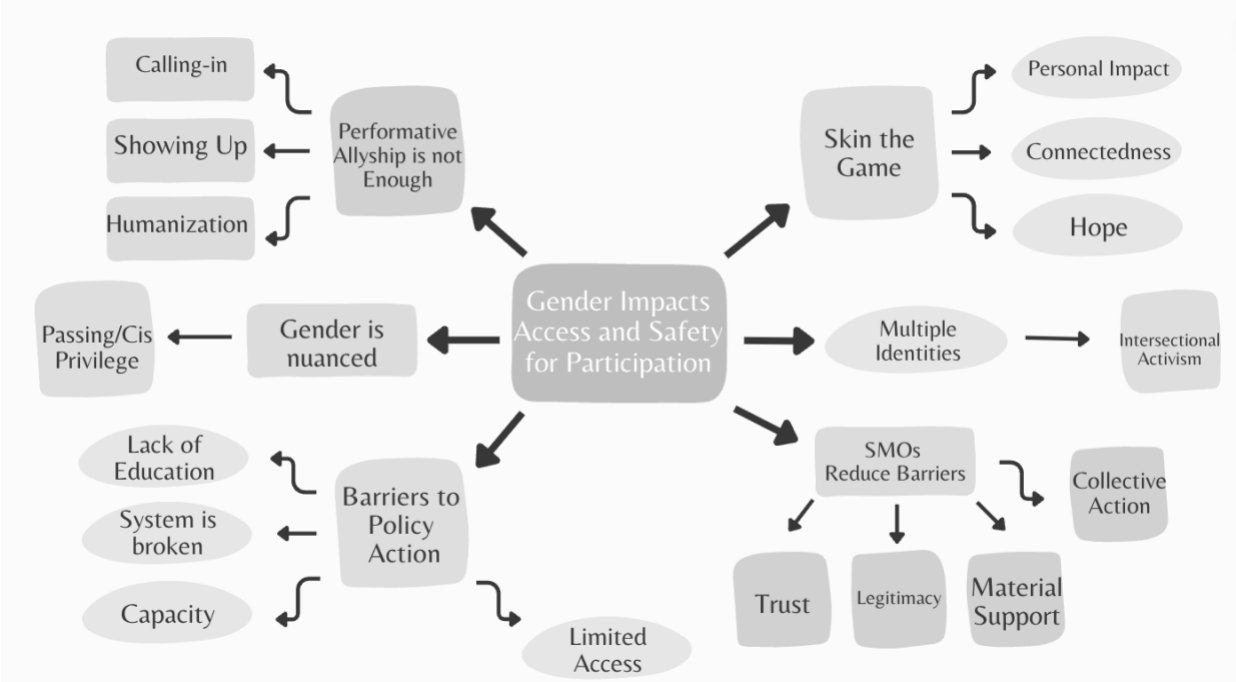


POLICY ACTION BY MOTIVATOR: TRANSGENDER PARTICIPANTS

POLICY ACTION BY MOTIVATOR: NONBINARY PARTICIPANTS



POLICY ACTION BY MOTIVATOR: CISGENDER PARTICIPANTS



APPENDIX D: THEMATIC MAP