

A Critical Activist Orientation Predicts Lower Latent Anti-disability Bias

Donnan Gravelle¹, Jeremy E. Sawyer², Gavin Rualo³, and Patricia Brooks¹

¹College of Staten Island

²City University of New York

³Staten Island Technical High School

May 6, 2023

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Despite legal efforts to reduce societal barriers, people with disabilities still face anti-disability bias, stereotyping, and stigma. According to the social movement hypothesis, people's participation in and identification with activist movements may reduce bias towards social outgroups. Alternatively, people's intergroup attitudes and bias may influence their participation in activist activities. **METHODS:** This study used structural equation modeling to investigate whether reduced bias towards people with disabilities is associated with critical activism and/or personal, familial, or work experience with disability. Undergraduates ($N = 497$) completed an online survey including measures of anti-disability bias, critical activist orientation, experience with disability, and demographic characteristics. **RESULTS:** The relation between having a critical activist orientation and lower anti-disability bias was bidirectional, suggesting reciprocal influences between individual-level attitudes and participation in social movements. Aligning with intergroup contact theory, personal and familial experience with disability correlated with reduced anti-disability bias, and familial and work experience with having a critical activist orientation. Male gender correlated with increased anti-disability bias, and male gender, White race, and higher social class with lower endorsements of a critical activist orientation. **CONCLUSION:** The results suggest that disability experience and social status influence critical activist identity, which predicts lower bias.

Hosted file

Critical Activism Submission.docx available at <https://authorea.com/users/615283/articles/641778-a-critical-activist-orientation-predicts-lower-latent-anti-disability-bias>