Social Movements, Workplace Allies, and the Labeling of Gender Equity Policy Changes

Abstract

Social movements seek allies as they campaign for social, political and organizational changes. How do activists gain allies in the targeted institutions they hope to change? Despite a recognition of the importance of the support of allies in theories about institutional change and social movements, these theories are largely silent on the micro-dynamics of ally mobilization. We examine how the labeling of organizational policies influences potential workplace allies' support for an organizational policy that benefits women. We theorize that one potential barrier to mobilizing allies in the workplace is a misalignment of the labels that activists use to describe and promote new policies and employees' identities. Using a mixed-methods approach across four experiments and twenty qualitative interviews, we demonstrate that employees high in feminist identification are more likely to support feminist-labeled (Feminist and #MeToo) than unlabeled policies, however those who are low in feminist identification are less likely to support feminist-labeled than unlabeled policies (Studies 1 and 2). We also illustrate that collective identity is a critical factor by exploring the effects of organizational- vs feminist-labeled policies by measuring and manipulating organizational identity: participants for whom organizational identification was high and feminist identification was low supported organizationally-labeled policies more than feminist-labeled polices (Studies 3 and 4). Within our studies we find that these effects are mediated via feelings of pride in the organization and their actions (and not fear or anger), lending support that positive emotions are a central mechanism in mobilizing allies.

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Activists frequently target organizations to promote a cause and campaign for social change (King and Pearce 2010; Briscoe and Gupta 2016). Research on social movements and institutional change has emphasized the role of activists in mobilizing others to take part in collective action in support of their cause (Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006; Rao and Giorgi, 2006; King 2008, McCarthy and Zald 1977; Soule 2009). Mobilizing a broad base of support is a key mechanism of institutional entrepreneurship (Fligstein, 2001; Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum, 2009). Much of what social movement activists do is intended to help them win the "hearts and minds" of prospective supporters, such as potential allies (King and Walker 2014). Allies, in this sense, are not movement activists themselves, but rather they are the movement sympathizers who lend their support to accomplishing movement goals (Oegema and Klandermans, 1994).

This support from allies is especially critical as social movements drive policy change inside organizations. Research shows that even once a movement-initiated policy is adopted, movement activists continue to work with potential allies to ensure that the intended institutional and organizational changes actually take place (Andrews, 2002). Social movement theory and organizational research both emphasize the role of allies in supporting new policy implementation, especially when such change is viewed as radical or potentially disruptive of the organization (Soule et al., 1999; Kellogg, 2009; 2011; Briscoe & Gupta, 2016; DeJordy, Scully, Ventresca, and Creed, 2020). And although having elite allies, or high-level actors who have decision-making authority within these organizations, is key to movement success (McAdam, 1996), implementation of new policies usually requires the support of allies at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, including mid-level employees (Huy, 2002; Kellogg, 2011).

Despite the importance of gaining allies, we know little about the micro-level process by which mid-level employees are converted into movement allies or "institutional insiders" (as they are sometimes referred) and support the implementation efforts of new organizational policies (Briscoe and Gupta 2016; DeCelles, Sonnenshein, and King, 2020). It is this transformation of mid-level employees into movement

allies that concerns us in this paper. Much social movement research considers the presence of allies to be an exogenous condition of movement mobilization and part of the "political opportunity structure," whereas we argue that movement allies (and the support they provide for policy change) can be endogenous to movement efforts (McAdam, 1996; Binder, 2002; Raeburn, 2004; McDonnell, King, and Soule, 2015; Milkis and Tichenor, 2019).

This effort to convert employees into movement allies goes beyond issue selling or other means of persuasion (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). In order to win allies, movements face distinct challenges, including translating movement frames in a way that resonates with employees (Snow et al., 1986). In addition, potential employee allies of a policy change may be wary of the reputational and social risks faced when supporting potentially polarizing policies within the organization (DeCelles et al. 2019, Meyerson and Scully 1995). Workplaces are "organizational habitats" distinct from policymaking domains and are not ideal sites for political consciousness raising (Katzenstein 1998, p. 19). Because successful implementation of the policy will both alter the institutional structure and require effort and dedication from organizational members, natural resistance to movement-initiated change within organizations is an obstacle to efforts to lead change within organizations (Giorgi et al. 2017; Kellogg 2009; Martin 1986; Meyerson and Scully 1995).

How, then, do employees become allies of a movement that seeks to implement a potentially controversial policy? This paper explores one aspect of the process of ally mobilization by focusing on the discourse and vocabulary used to introduce new policies and the fit of this discourse with the employees' views of themselves. That is, we theorize that the extent to which supporters of a new policy use labels that resonate with employees' relevant collective identities will be associated with employee mobilization. Policy labels are one method used by activists to energize potential allies. Labels can be drawn from broader social contexts outside the organization, as well as from within the organization itself. We compare and contrast labels associated with the women's rights movement, such as 'feminist' and '#MeToo', versus organizationally-related labels to better understand this transformation process. However, the labels that activists use to mobilize people in the broader public to join their movement may

not resonate inside the target institutions they seek to change and may even be highly contentious and polarizing (Feinberg and Willer 2011; Hoffman 2011; Jasper 2008).

We argue that the collective identity of employees and the label itself play a central role in whether the policy label will resonate, and which identity is present is a powerful instigator of support for a movement's goals and increases people's willingness to mobilize on behalf of a movement (Polletta and Jasper 2001). We explore two forms of collective identity: feminist identification and organizational identification. Identification as a feminist ought to make individuals more open to feminist-labeled policies, whereas a lack of identification ought to make individuals more resistant to feminist-labeled policies. In addition, we believe that for those that lack a feminist identification, organizational identification can make individuals more open to organizationally-labeled policies over feminist-labeled policies. Moreover, because social movement scholars have argued that emotions mediate mobilization into collective action, either for good or for bad (Berezin 2002, DeCelles et al. 2019, Goodwin et al. 2009, Jasper 2011), we contend that feelings of pride toward the organization is a motivating emotion, central in support for labeled policies.

Our paper makes several theoretical contributions. First, our study seeks to unpack the micro-foundations of social movement mobilization inside of organizations. Whereas much past research on social movements and organizations has focused on external activist efforts to reform organizations (e.g., King, 2008) or on efforts to lead change by convincing elite decision-makers (e.g., Raeburn, 2004), we theorize how activists mobilize mid-level employees to become allies in the implementation of new policies. Thus, our paper contributes to a growing body of research that examines how activists shape policy implementation efforts within organizations (Kellogg, 2009, 2011; Dejordy et al. 2020). Collaboration between external movements and internal allies at varying levels of the organization sustains implementation efforts. Our work provides insight into the critical process of understanding how to gain internal allies if their desired changes are going to take effect.

Second, our paper elaborates on an important micro-foundation of ally mobilization and policy change within organizations (Briscoe and Gupta, 2016). We theorize that one potential barrier to

mobilizing allies in the workplace is a misalignment of the labels that activists use to describe and promote new policies and employees' identities. Inasmuch as these policy labels do not align with the way individuals self-identify, those policies will likely not resonate with employees, even if they fundamentally agree with the policy's objectives. As a result, we argue that the labels activists use to mobilize participants in the external movement may have unintentional negative consequences for mobilizing a broad base of employee allies within the target organization. Thus, our paper adds to an important conversation around labels and identity as mechanisms of mobilizing stakeholders (e.g., Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003; Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, and Hubbard, 2016).

Finally, our paper contributes to theoretical discussions about the importance of discourse, labels, and identity in motivating institutional change. Other organizational scholars have argued that labels and categories create cultural and emotional resonance, beyond their cognitive effects in shaping attention and information processing (Weber, Heinze, and DeSoucey, 2008; Howard-Grenville, Metzger, and Meyer, 2012; Glynn and Navis, 2013; Augustine and King, 2016). Our research builds on this idea by demonstrating that the labels that activists use may create roadblocks to policy change inasmuch as they fail to resonate with their intended audience. Further, we show that when policies are labeled to align with employees' collective identities, the policies create more emotional resonance and increase support among these potential allies. This resonance takes the form of positive emotional reactions, such as pride in the organization's actions. Thus, our paper builds on the idea that labels are important building-blocks in the institutional change process.

We used a mixed-methods approach of explanatory sequential design (Cresswell and Clark 2011, Kapoor and Klueter 2015). To test our hypotheses, we conducted four experimental studies ($N = 2020$) as well as a qualitative data collection involving interviews with 20 working professionals from a diverse range of organizational contexts. Studies 1 and 2 examined whether claiming a feminist identity moderates the effect of policy labeling (i.e., 'feminist' or '#MeToo' vs. unlabeled) on policy support (Hypothesis 1a). Studies 3 and 4 examined whether organizational labels (i.e., the organization's name vs. 'feminist') can increase the policy support by those who are low in feminist identification, but high in

organizational identification (Hypothesis 2a). In addition, Studies 2-4 tested whether our proposed moderated effect mediates via feelings of pride in the organization and their actions (and not fear or anger; Hypotheses 1b and 2b). Our qualitative data provided depth and external validity with regard to our phenomena of interest, and thus we followed our findings in each study with illustrative quotes from the interviews of working professionals (Kapoor and Klueter 2015).

Our mixed-methods approach offers several benefits. Our experimental approach rules out a host of potential confounds one might otherwise encounter (Brewer 1985) and allows for replicability (Camerer et al. 2016, Croson et al. 2007). Furthermore, by randomly assigning participants to conditions of labeled or unlabeled policies and high or low organizational identification, we are able to establish evidence of direct causality (Coleman 1990, Merton 1949). Finally, although social movement scholars have long understood the importance of gaining allies as a macro-phenomenon, the micro-mechanisms by which movements create allies are often obscured by approaches grounded in the institutional level of analysis (Bitektine and Miller 2015, Felin et al. 2012). By employing an experimental approach, we illuminate some of these micro-mechanisms, with implications that deepen understanding of the processes related to social movements within organizations.

Theoretical Development

How labeling organizational policies influences employees' support

Social movements are particularly adept at using labels in their discourse (Augustine and King 2019). Activists use labels to contest and shift meanings, to mobilize people to participate in collective action, and to influence how they interpret the problems (and thus which solutions they see as necessary) the movements seek to address (Benford and Snow 2000, Snow et al. 1986; Ferree, 2003; Walby, 2005). Thus, meaning construction and the connotation of key words becomes a central way activists can gain or lose support, especially among potential allies. Importantly, connotations of labels vary by audience (Galinsky et al. 2013, Wang et al. 2017).

The connotations of labels is particularly relevant to activists in the gender equity effort (hooks 2000). In particular, the label 'feminist' was first coined to describe the belief in equality for women in

the early 20th century, yet, in the late 20th century, took on a number of derogatory connotations that triggered negative reactions to the movement (1999). In recent years, labels such has 'feminist' and '#MeToo', have become popular terms that highlight the desire to address gendered inequalities in everyday life, politics, and the workplace (McVeigh 2013). Yet, these labels ignite controversy and debate in terms of both negative and positive connotation that the label imbues onto the movement. Efforts to address the blatant pay inequity and sexual harassment that occurs within organizational boundaries are often accompanied by the introduction of policies to support gender equality (Abrahams 2017, Berg 2009). While these labels related to gender equity have historically come from outside those organizations, more recently they have begun to spread from within. Efforts to address the blatant pay inequity and sexual harassment that occurs within organizational boundaries are often accompanied by the introduction of policies to support gender equality (Abrahams 2017, Berg 2009). Thus, these organizational policies are often discussed in relation to the contemporary movements in hopes of inspiring allies within the organization (Higginbottom 2018, Lyn Pesce 2018).

Scholars have noted numerous reasons that employees may find it challenging to engage with activists, including reputational risks and potential harm that comes to their careers (e.g., Meyerson and Scully, 1995; DeCelles et al., 2020). We posit that an additional barrier to mobilizing movement allies in the workplace is a misalignment of the labels that social movements use as part of their discourse and employees' identities. Inasmuch as social movements use labels to describe policy changes that do not align with employees' own identities, those proposed policies will not create the desired emotional resonance (Schrock, Holden, and Reid, 2004). The challenge that movements face is describing those policies in a way that resonates broadly with potential allies among employees, not just with those who already see themselves as participants in the movement. We maintain that labeling policies in a particular way is one way in which a movement communicates its collective identity. Labels may convey collective identity, especially inasmuch as groups use them to signify membership in a community, which in turn creates a sense of personal belonging and identification within individuals (Glynn and Navis, 2013).

Although this label may motivate people who self-identify with the movement, it will likely have the opposite effect on people who do not identify in this way.

Collective Identities. Organizational scholars have recognized the critical link between collective identity, individual identities, and emotional resonance (Weber, Heinze, and DeSoucey, 2008; Howard-Grenville, Metzger, and Meyer, 2012). Identities are used to help one make sense of the environment and prepare one for action in the environment (Oyserman, 2009). Individuals allocate more attention to identity-relevant stimuli and cues (Oyserman, 2009; Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2007; Reed, Forehand, Puntoni, & Warlop, 2012) and regulate their emotions, attitudes, behaviors to align with their activated identity (Mercurio & Forehand, 2011; Reed et al., 2012). In this paper, we focus on two types of identity, feminist and organizational.

Feminist Identification. We argue that a central factor that must be considered with regard to gaining insider allies for labeled policies is whether these employees themselves possess a feminist identity. As a collective identity, feminism is a complex web of political and personal ideologies (Zucker and Bay-Cheng 2010). However, regardless of their differences, people who identify as feminist share a bond which ties together those who see gender as a useful lens of analysis, argue against sexism, and seek in general to improve the standing of women in society (Rupp and Taylor 1999). Feminists see themselves as part of the same movement community and as possessing a common identity (Whittier 1997). While some individuals support feminist beliefs and principles, not all are willing to explicitly identify as feminists (Zucker and Bay-Cheng 2010). Indeed, a YouGov poll indicates that the percentage of women who self-identify as feminists increased from 32% to 38% from 2016 to 2018 (Ballard 2018). At the same time, only 22% of men identify as feminist, and 48% of women still do not identify as feminists. Moreover, 48% of non-identifying women believe that “feminists are too extreme.”

This division between those who identify as feminists and those who do not produces challenges in recruiting and mobilizing allies, especially in workplaces in which individuals may face sanctions for being seen as transgressive (Meyerson and Scully 1995). Collective identities lay at the crux of the transformation of the scattered experiences of individuals into unified and active collectives, and adopting

the identity is often an important part of understanding and investing in activism (Duncan 1999, Polletta and Jasper 2001). In line with this argument, research has demonstrated that possessing a feminist identity drives increased support for the movement's goals and an increased likelihood to act on behalf of those goals, with those who do not identify as feminists being less likely to take part in activism on behalf of women's rights (Nelson et al. 2008).

Specifically, we suggest that labeling organizational policies as 'feminist' or '#MeToo' increases support from those who identify as a feminist, but reduces support from those who identify less as a feminist. For feminists, seeing visible confirmation of the efficacy of one's principles and beliefs in the form of a labeled policy can function as a form of identify validation.

Hypothesis 1 (H1a): Feminist identification will moderate the relationship between policy label (unlabeled vs. labeled as 'feminist' or '#MeToo)) and support of the policy. Labeled policies will receive more support than unlabeled policies for those high in feminist identification; in contrast, labeled policies will receive less support than unlabeled policies for those low in feminist identification.

Organizational Identification. To further our study of collective identities, we further examine organizational identity as an additional lever that might trigger resonance when certain organizational policies are introduced. Ashforth and Mael (1989) conceptualized organizational identification as a perception of 'oneness' with the organization whereby an employee defines him or herself in terms of organizational membership (Haslam, 2001; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Van Knippenberg, 2000). Specifically, organizational identification is when "key aspects of the individual's self-definition are drawn from the organizations' perceived attributes" (Conroy, Henle, Shore, & Stelman, 2017: 185).

For example, employees who identify with their organization are more likely to endorse and incorporate the organization's norms and values into their self and to internalize organizational outcomes as their own (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Moreover, organizationally-identified employees are more motivated to endorse and support goals geared towards benefitting the organization (Chen et al., 2016; De Cremer, van Knippenberg, van Dijke, & Bos, 2006; Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Van Dick, Hirst, Grojean, & Wieseke, 2007; Worchel, Rothgerber, Day, Hart, & Butemeyer, 1998) and to pursue organizationally-

important outcomes (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Haslam, Van Knippenberg, Platow, & Ellemers, 2014) that are congruent with organizational goals (Oyserman, 2009). In fact, individuals will adjust their cognitions and behaviors to align with what is contextually appropriate (Fiske, 1992). Failing to meet organizational goals may threaten the identity of highly-identified organizational members (Petriglieri, 2011).

We draw from work suggesting that employees who feel that their organization shares their values exhibit more positive organizational attitudes (Cable and Judge 1996, Kristof-Brown et al. 2002, Saks and Ashforth 1997). Thus, organizations can influence one's sense of belonging, and certain actions become important to employees because they perceive that their identity is affected or at stake (Taylor 1985). Congruently, social identity theory suggests individuals will support institutions that embody those collective identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989), and we suggest that a strong confirmation of that embodiment can occur when the organizations' policy labels emphasize organizational membership.

Specifically, we propose that for those that do not identify as feminists, organizational identity may serve to promote support for the policy. That is, for those who highly identify with their organization, a policy labeled with the organization's name will serve as a form of identity validation, and as a result, drive increased resonance with this policy over the feminist labeled policy. Instead, feminist-labeled policies (compared to organizationally-labeled policies) may be met with reduced support, as they are explicitly associated with a movement with which these individuals do not identify.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): Organizational identification and feminist identification will moderate the relationship between policy label (labeled as 'feminist' or the organization's name) and support of the policy. Organizationally-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist-labeled policies for those high in organizational identification and low in feminist-identification; no other differences will emerge.

Organizational Pride as the Key Mechanism. Relevant to this phenomenon is work on emotions and social movements; we argue that organizational pride, or "the pleasure taken in being associated with one's employer" (Helm, 2013, p. 544), is an important factor. Emotions are central to the movement mobilization process (Berezin 2002, Goodwin et al. 2000, Jasper 2011). Emotions of various sorts—including joy and hope—can be the stimulus that provokes individuals to give their support to a

movement and exert effort in helping to realize the movement's ideals (Van Stekelenburg et al. 2011, Van Zomeren et al. 2004). Similarly, organizational scholars have argued that emotions undergird the functioning of organizations (e.g., Ashforth and Humphrey 1995) and is a powerful motivator for individuals to assist in organizational change efforts (Huy 1999). Researchers have suggested that positive emotions, such as hope and pride, may help individuals to overcome barriers to participate in movements within organizations (DeCelles et al. 2019).

We argue that organizational pride is a key underlying mechanism driving the hypotheses above, such that labeled policies will differentially influence levels of pride in the organization, depending on the employees' collective identities, which will then drive levels of support for these policies. An individual's appraisal of an event, and not the event's objective reality, is the true driver of their emotional experience (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer et al., 2001), such that the same stimuli can drive drastically different reactions depending on different cognitive appraisals of those stimuli. In other words, the cognitive appraisal of an event is what determines the emotions felt. Here, we focus on whether the label used for the policy serves as an environmental cue that influences employees' emotional reactions.

For a self-conscious emotion such as pride to arise, the stimuli causing the emotional response must be seen as closely related to the self (Hume 1978). This link, or closeness to self, is related to the idea of identity affirmation, or, the process of developing positive feelings for one's social group or organization (Phinney and Kohatsu 1997). We focus on pride because self-enhancement is a fundamental goal of human existence (Allport, 1937; McDougall, 1933), and individuals are highly sensitive to cues that induce positive emotion about the self or the groups to which they belong (Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). This includes a sensitivity to positive information about the organizations to which they belong (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Wells, 2001), and to cues that add to their organizational pride.

Similarly, an organization that explicitly confirms the identities of members of the social movement within it should expect shifts in pride. That is, seeing confirmation of the efficacy of their principles and beliefs via labeled policies may instill a sense of pride in the organization for feminists.

However, for those who do not identify as feminists, labeled policies may in fact reduce pride in the organization because these labeled policies do not affirm an identity these individuals do not hold; rather they hold negative connotations around these labels.

In turn, pride may influence levels of support toward the organization's policies. Classic work on social identity suggests that pride is an important element of collective identity for group cohesion and cooperation (Turner 1982, Turner 1984). In line with these arguments and prior work on social movements and emotion (e.g., Jasper 2011), we draw from reinforcement sensitivity theory (Carver and White 1994, Gray 1970, 1987) which explores how individuals' arousal systems regulate their motivation and behavior, and which we suggest plays a part in mobilization decisions. Most relevant to our theorizing is the behavioral approach system (BAS), which regulates approach-oriented goals. For example, the BAS energizes those experiencing positive emotion (Watson et al. 1999), also increasing perseverance in pursuing goals (Williams and DeSteno 2008). For those presented with the policy, experiencing pride sends an emotional signal to the BAS, which in its activation spurs engagement and action (Lazarus 1991). Indeed, the emotions resulting from particular cognitive appraisals inspire behaviors and attitudes in line with those feelings (Ballinger & Schoorman, 2007; Krantz, 1983), and act as drivers of job attitudes (Lebowitz & Dovidio, 2015; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). Positive emotions resulting from an organization's actions improve employees' attitudes toward their organization (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), and pride, specifically, motivates stronger bonds with the organization (Helm, 2013; Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014). When organizational pride increases, membership in the organization becomes more important to individuals' self-concept (Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010), and this increased centrality increases behaviors helpful to the organization (Brickson, 2013).

Thus, for those with feminist identities, we expect feminist-labeled policies to increase support because of increased feelings of pride in their organization; however, for who are low in feminist identification, we expect labeled policies to decrease support because of decreased feelings of pride in their organization.

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): The mediated effect of policy label on support of the policy through organizational pride will be moderated by feminist identification. Labeled policies will receive more support than unlabeled policies because of increased organizational pride by feminist identifiers; in contrast, labeled policies will receive less support than unlabeled policies because of reduced organizational pride by non-identifiers.

Similarly, for those with who are low in feminist identification, we expect feminist-labeled policies to increase support because of increased feelings of pride in their organization; however, for who are low in feminist identification, we expect labeled policies to decrease support because of decreased feelings of pride in their organization.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): The mediated effect of policy label on support of the policy through organizational pride will be moderated by organizational identification and feminist identification. Organization-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist-labeled policies because of increased organizational pride by those high in organizational identification and low in feminist identification; no other mediations will emerge.

Research Overview

We tested H1a-H2 in 4 experiments and 20 qualitative interviews of working professionals. The professionals we interviewed came from a variety of backgrounds (finance, marketing, higher education, healthcare, etc.) with experiences of organizational policy changes related to women's rights issues (see Table 1 for demographic information). We conducted semi-structured interviews, which lasted approximately thirty minutes, using an interview guide (see Appendix).

In addition to testing our hypotheses, we used these interviews to explore whether there was variation within organizations of policy labeling (i.e., organizational policies introduced and discussed in conjunction with labels such as "feminist" and "#MeToo"). The professionals we interviewed affirmed this variation in policy labeling, with some explicitly noting policies were discussed without labels and others noting policies were discussed in conjunction with these labels. For instance, Jane[1], who works in the housing development industry, noted that when certain organizational events occurred, the usage of the label "feminist", "*Sometimes it would be explicit, like this is an International Women's Day celebration event. So I was like, yeah, we're going to highlight a feminist lens here. You know, we wouldn't shy away from an event that called itself feminist*." The #MeToo label was also used within organizations. Samantha, who worked in a law firm, said that, "*Whenever there's communications that go*

out, like those hashtags are used…I know that we have a big screen in on our lobby that always has new things coming up on it. Like it continually rotates and then they will have like a page on the #MeToo movement and diversity and stuff." Similarly, Alexis, who works in education, noted that the usage of #MeToo was prevalent, "*Definitely #Me Too is used, even by the employees it's used. I've heard it a lot. I think at some of our meetings, I think between colleagues.*" These individuals' experiences lend credence to the idea that the use of these labels is a vibrant and central part of professional life as both external activists and institutional insiders seek to shepherd their efforts through their organizational contexts.

Finally, we also confirmed that explore there was variation within organizations of policy labeling related to the organization (i.e., organizational policies introduced and discussed in conjunction with labels that included the organization's name). We found evidence online that some organizations did label their policies (e.g., 'Google Diversity' or the 'Starbucks Pay Equity Principles & Best Practices')

Study 1

We obtained Institutional Review Board approval before conducting our studies. Study 1 tests H1a, examining whether feminist-labeled are less likely to support labeled than unlabeled policies and whether feminists are more likely to support labeled than unlabeled policies. We asked working adults to imagine a scenario in which their CEO announced the implementation of a new gender equity policy.

Participants and design. Participants were 394 working adults (206 men, 41 African Americans, 28 East Asians, 9 South Asians, 280 Caucasians, 36 Hispanic; mean age = 35.42 years, *SD* = 10.89, range = 18 to 72 years old) recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a platform that meets psychometric standards in the literature (Buhrmester et al. 2011).[2] They were randomly assigned within a two-factor (policy label: labeled, unlabeled) design, with feminist identification as a moderator.

Procedure. Participants gave consent and were then presented with an online survey that assessed their level of feminist identification, presented the labeling manipulation, dependent variables, and demographic questions. Participants were then released and paid.

Feminist identification. Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with statements about identifying as a feminist (3 items, e.g., "I identify as a feminist," from 1 = Disagree strongly to 5 = Agree

strongly; adapted from Toller et al. (2004). We averaged the items (α = .98), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of feminist identification.

Policy labeling manipulation. Participants were told they received an email from their organization. In the *unlabeled* [*labeled*] condition, the email informed them that, "Your company has announced that your CEO will implement a new [feminist] policy to increase the gender equity of the workplace. Your CEO is forming a new task force to help determine what policy changes are needed."

Support for the policy. We measured participants' likelihood to undertake actions in support of the policy (6 items, e.g., "Try to recruit others to join the task force," and, "Volunteer your efforts to help the task force, even if it means extra work during work for you," from 1 = Very unlikely to 6 = Very likely). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater support of the policy.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables are shown in Table 2.[3]

Support for the policy. We ran a linear regression with support for the policy as the dependent variable and feminist identification and policy label as the independent variables. In line with H1a, a feminist identification x policy label interaction emerged (b = .37, SE = .09, t(390) = 4.16, p < .001, *CI 95%*[.20, .55]; see Figure 1). Feminist-labeled (one standard deviation below the mean on feminist identification; -1SD) supported the labeled policy less than the unlabeled policy, b = -.64, SE = .17, t(390) = -3.89, p < .001, *CI 95%*[-.97, -.32]. However, feminists (+1SD above the mean on feminist identification) supported the labeled policy more than the unlabeled policy, b = .33, SE = .17, t(390) = 1.99, p = .047, *CI 95%*[.004, .66].

We also found support for H1a in our interviews. Frederick, a university administrator, who noted that his university chose not to label policies, "*You know, I think there's a deliberate choice when talking about policy and talking about programs being implemented to stay away from language like feminist, because I think there would be a backlash in certain parts of the university around that. I think formal is trying to make it as neutral as possible so that it's not controversial and not seen as divisive*." This suggests an awareness that feminist-labeled might show less support in the face of labeled policies.

Interestingly, Frederick went on to say he personally identified as a feminist and thought, "*it's okay to use these terms. I think people need to be made aware of certain things and it's okay if things are confrontational,*" driving home the point that identifiers likely see labeled policies as aligned with their beliefs, and thus are more likely to support those labeled policies. Finally, we also found support for this reasoning from Sue, a member of a domestic violence organization with a preponderance of feminist-identifying employees, who stated that, "*Well, this was a feminist organization, so feminist language really under that was the sort of underpinning of conversations we would have at work…There was no one who worked in the agency, I don't think who wouldn't call themselves a feminist, cause that was just kind of implicit*." Sue went on to say, "*[Her supervisor] made those connections that she thought as 'this is important, if we're going to be a feminist organization to see that our policies around mothering are connected to that'… So I think some of the work and advocacy that happened with helping, when using feminism, feminist language and things like that just sort of help make some of those connections."*

Study 1, in support of H1a, found that feminist identification moderated the relationship between policy label and support for the policy. Feminists supported the gender equity policy more when it was explicitly labeled as feminist as opposed to when it was not; meanwhile feminist-labeled supported the same policy less when it was labeled as feminist as opposed to when it was not.

Study 2

Study 1 told working adults that their organization announced that they would implement a new gender equity policy (labeled 'feminist' vs. unlabeled); to test whether our findings are robust to different types of policies and labels, we included a similar scenario in which a sexual harassment policy (labeled as 'MeToo' vs. unlabeled) was introduced. As in Study 1, Study 2 tested H1a. This study also tested H2a, which proposes that reduced pride will mediate the effect of labeling on reduced support of the policy for feminist-labeled, and increased pride will mediate the effect of labeling on increased support for feminists.

Participants and design. Participants were 724 working adults (83 African Americans, 44 East Asians, 12 South Asians, 525 Caucasians, 60 Hispanic; mean age = 34.51 years, *SD* = 10.01, range = 18

to 71 years old; 407 men) who were recruited via MTurk. They were randomly assigned within a 2 (policy label: labeled, unlabeled) x 2 (policy type: gender equity, anti-sexual harassment) factor between-participants design. Our independent variable was the policy label, with feminist identification as a moderator, and the dependent variable as the amount of support for the policy.

Procedure. Participants gave consent and were then presented with an online survey that assessed their level of feminist identification, presented the labeling manipulation, mediating and dependent variables, and demographic questions. Participants were then released and paid.

Feminist identification. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .97), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of feminist identification.

Policy labeling manipulation. Participants imagined receiving an email from their organization. For the *gender equity policy* conditions, in the *unlabeled* [*labeled*] condition, the email said that, "Your company has announced that it will implement a new [feminist] policy to increase the gender equity of the workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

For the *sexual harassment policy* conditions, in the *unlabeled* [*labeled*] condition, the email informed them that, "Your company has announced that it will implement a new policy [based on the principles of the #MeToo movement] to reduce sexual harassment in the workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

Mediating emotions. In addition to pride, we collected anger and fear measures to rule out explanations that negative emotions drive our proposed effects (adapted from Shaver et al. 1987).

Pride. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt proud, eager, and enthusiastic (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of pride.

Anger. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt anger, hatred, and frustration (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of anger.

Fear. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt fear, alarm, and distress (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of fear.

Support for the policy. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater likelihood of actions in support of the policy.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables are shown in Table 3.[4]

Feminist identification moderates the effects of labeling on support.

Support for the policy. In line with H1a, a policy label x feminist identification interaction emerged (b = .23, SE = .07, t(720) = 3.52, p = .0005, *CI 95%*[.10, .36]; see Figure 2). Feminist-labeled (-1SD) supported the labeled policy less than the unlabeled policy, b = -.37, SE = .12, t(720) = -3.02, p = .003, *CI 95%*[-.61, -.13]. However, feminists (+1SD) supported the labeled policy more than the unlabeled policy, b = .24, SE = .12, t(720) = 1.96, p = .050, *CI 95%*[.0004, .48].

Pride moderated mediation. We tested whether the mediating effect of pride in one's organization is moderated by feminist identification. Following Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), we conducted a first-stage moderated path analysis and tested for mediation using a series of linear regressions (see Table 4). A significant policy labeling x feminist identification interaction effect on pride emerged (b = .39, SE = .09, t(720) = 4.39, p < .001, *CI 95%*[.21, .56]), suggesting that the effect of labeling on pride was moderated by feminist identity. The second regression demonstrated that pride was positively associated with support for the policy (b = .44, SE = .02, t(720) = 19.80, p < .001, *CI 95%*[.39, .48]). The conditional indirect effect of framing on support via pride was examined at high and low levels of feminist identification using 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout and Bolger 2002). For those low in feminist identification, the feminist-labeled policy produced less support than the unlabeled policy via decreased feelings of pride in the organization, *CI 95%*[-.44, -.10]. However, for feminists, the labeled policy produced more support than the unlabeled policy via increased feelings of pride, *CI 95%*[.07, .30]. This supports H2a.

We also tested whether feminist identity interacted with label condition to influence anger or fear. In neither case was the interaction significant, all *t*'s < 1.32, all *p*'s > .10.

Relevant to these findings are the experiences of individuals in our qualitative interviews. Jane, who had noted above that the label 'feminist' had been used in her organization, and who identified as a feminist herself, expressed feelings of pride around labeled policies, "*So I think there was a lot of pride about [the organization] being identified that way. Being a part of that community. There's also a part of the pride comes from that recognition and just like doing well. And, if that is part of your own values that you feel like your business is living up to those personal values…especially in newer places where, for example, the idea of being first I think helps, or being like an early adopter. So there's this part of the pride that comes from that.*"

Conversely, Brenda, a Director, thought that the effects of labeling the sexual harassment training policy that was implemented at her institution would reduce pride by feminist-labeled, "*I think it would be undermining to the policy [if they labeled]... positioning it that way would lead to more people dismissing it as a fad rather than it being a necessary intervention, given that many people are unaware of behaviors that are harassing…I think if we associated a training with a movement that some subscribe to and some don't subscribe to, I think they would say, well, that's not my kind of thing and so I don't care*."

Study 2 replicated the Study 1 findings with regard to H1a: those high in feminist identification supported the gender equity policy more when it was explicitly labeled as a feminist policy as opposed to when it was not; meanwhile feminist-labeled supported the same policy less when it was labeled as opposed to when it was not. In addition, H2a was supported: while for feminists, the feminist-labeled policy produced more support than the unlabeled policy via increased feelings of pride. In contrast, for those low in feminist identification, the feminist-labeled policy produced less support than the unlabeled policy via reduced feelings of pride,

Study 3

Studies 1-2 established that our findings were robust to different types of labels. This study goes on to test H1b, which proposes that organizational and feminist identification will moderate the

relationship between policy label (organization vs. feminist) and support of the policy. We expect that organizationally-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist policies for those high in organizational identification and low in feminist-identification, and that no other differences will emerge. It also tests H2b, which proposes that the mediated effect of policy label on support of the policy through organizational pride will be moderated by organizational identification and feminist identification. We expect that organization-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist-labeled policies because of increased organizational pride by those high in organizational identification and low in feminist identification, and that no other mediations would emerge. We pre-registered our analysis plan for this study (https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=fk9cr3).

Participants and design. Participants were 383 working adults (57 African Americans, 21 East Asians, 2 South Asians, 261 Caucasians, 39 Hispanic, 3 other; mean age = 35.33 years, *SD* = 10.15, range = 18 to 68 years old; 244 men) who were recruited via MTurk. They were randomly assigned within a 2 (policy label: feminist labeled, organization label) factor between-participants design, with policy label as the independent variable and feminist and organizational identity as moderators. The dependent variables were pride and the amount of support for the policy.

Procedure. Participants gave consent and were then presented with an online survey that assessed their level of feminist and organizational identification, presented the labeling manipulation, mediating dependent variables, and demographic questions. Participants were then released and paid.

Feminist identification. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of feminist identification.

Organizational identification. Participants responded to a six-item measure of organizational identification (e.g., “When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult,” “This organization’s successes are my successes,” from 1= Disagree strongly to 5 = Agree strongly; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). We averaged the items (α = .87), with higher numbers indicating greater organizational identification.

Policy labeling manipulation. Participants imagined receiving an email from their organization. For the *feminist label policy* condition, the email said that, "Your company has announced that it is planning to implement a new feminist gender equity policy at your workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

For the *organization label policy* conditions, participants were asked the name of the organization they were currently employed at, then read that the email informed them that, "Your company has announced that it is planning to implement a new [provided organization name] gender equity policy at your workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

Mediating emotions. In addition to pride, we collected anger and fear measures to rule out explanations that negative emotions drive our proposed effects (adapted from Shaver et al. 1987).

Organizational pride about the policy. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt proud of their organization (e.g., "I am proud of what the company has achieved,", 4 items from the emotional organizational pride scale of Goutheir and Rhein, 1=Not at all to 7=Very much). We averaged the items (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of pride.

Anger over policy implementation. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt anger, hatred, and frustration (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of anger.

Fear about policy implementation. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt fear, alarm, and distress (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of fear.

Support for the policy. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater likelihood of actions in support of the policy.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables are shown in Table 5.

Support for the policy. We ran a linear regression, with organizational identification and feminist identification as moderators and policy label (0 = organization; 1 = feminist) as the independent variable (Figure 3). Two main effects emerged: as organizational identification increased, so did support for the policy (regardless of label, $b = .71$, $SE = .10$, $t(375) = 7.12$, $p < .001$, *CI 95%*[.51, .90]), and as feminist identification increased, so did support for the policy (regardless of label, $b = .35$, $SE = .06$, $t(375) = 5.50$, $p < .001$, *CI 95%*[.22, .47]). In line with H1b, a three-way (organization identification x feminist identification x policy label) interaction emerged ($b = .21$, $SE = .10$, $t(375) = 2.08$, $p = .038$, *CI 95%*[.01, .40]). As expected, when organizational identification was high (+1SD) and feminist identification was low (-1SD), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy, $b = -.70$, $SE = .23$, $t(375) = -3.04$, $p = .003$, *CI 95%*[-1.16, -.25]. One other effect also emerged: when organizational identification was moderate (mean level) and feminist identification was low (-1SD), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy, $b = -.48$, $SE = .178$, $t(375) = -2.88$, $p = .004$, *CI 95%*[-.80, -.15].

Moderated mediation. We tested whether organizational pride would mediate the effects of labeling on support for the labeled policy, moderated by feminist identification and organizational identification. Following Preacher et al. (2007), we conducted a first-stage double moderated path analysis and tested for mediation using a series of linear regressions. While directional, the three-way (organization identification x feminist identification x policy label) effect on pride as the dependent variable, was not significant ($b = .13$, $SE = .13$, $t(375) = 1.06$, $p = .29$, *CI 95%*[-.11, .38]). Moreover, the conditional indirect effects of labeling on support via pride was examined at high and low levels of feminist identification and organizational identification using 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout and Bolger 2002). None of the indirect effects were significant via feelings of pride. We also tested whether feminist identity and organizational identity interacted with the label condition to influence anger or fear. In neither case was the interaction significant, all t's < .68, all p's > .50.

Study 3, in support of H1a, found that feminist identification and organizational identification moderated the relationship between policy labeling and support for the policy when organizational identification was high (+1SD) and feminist identification was low (-1SD), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy. Even when organizational identification was at mean levels, and feminist identification at low levels, participants supported the organization labeled policy more than the feminist labeled policy.

Study 4: moderating role of organizational (manipulated) and feminist (measured) identification

This study goes on to test H1b, which proposes that organizational and feminist identification will moderate the relationship between policy label (organization vs. feminist) and support of the policy. We expect that organization-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist-labeled policies for those high in organizational identification and low in feminist identification, and that no other differences will emerge. It also tests H2b, which proposes that the mediated effect of policy label on support of the policy through organizational pride will be moderated by organizational identification and feminist identification. We expect that organization-labeled policies will receive more support than feminist-labeled policies because of increased organizational pride by those high in organizational identification and low in feminist identification, and that no other mediations will emerge. We pre-registered our analysis plan for this study (https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=cv3vu9)

Participants and design. Participants were 519 working adults (66 African Americans, 26 East Asians, 6 South Asians, 378 Caucasians, 35 Hispanic, 8 other; mean age = 36.26 years, *SD* = 10.66, range = 18 to 82 years old; 330 men, 184 women, 4 nonbinary, 1 prefer not to say) who were recruited via MTurk. They were randomly assigned within a 2 (policy label: feminist labeled, organization labeled) x 2 (organizational identity: high, low) factor between-participants design, with policy label as the independent variable and feminist and organizational identity as moderators. The dependent variables were organizational pride and the amount of support for the policy.

Procedure. Participants gave consent and were then presented with an online survey that assessed their level of feminist and identification, presented the organizational identification and labeling

manipulations, mediating and dependent variables, and demographic questions. Participants were then released and paid.

Feminist identification. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .97), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of feminist identification.

Manipulation of organizational identification. To manipulate organizational identification we used a modified form of the manipulation used by CITE and colleagues (CITE), in which all participants were asked to imagine they were a marketing director at UMRO Inc., and had worked at the company for 3 years. In the *high (low) organizational identification* condition they were told it was clear UMRO was a good (not a good fit), that their coworkers held very similar attitudes (very different attitudes), and that if a more promising job presented itself they may well pass it by (almost certainly jump at it) (see Appendix for complete scenarios). Participants were then asked to write 1-2 sentences about what it was like to work at UMRO.

Manipulation check. Participants responded to a modified three-item measure of organizational identification (e.g., "When talking about UMRO, I would usually say 'we' rather than 'they'," 1= Disagree strongly to 5 = Agree strongly; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). We averaged the items (α = .91), with higher numbers indicating greater organizational identification.

Policy labeling manipulation. Participants imagined receiving an email from their organization. For the *feminist label policy* condition, the email said that, "Your company has announced that it is planning to implement a new feminist gender equity policy at your workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

For the *organization label policy* conditions, the email said that, "Your company has announced that it is planning to implement a new UMRO gender equity policy at your workplace. A new task force is being formed to help determine what policy changes are needed."

Mediating emotions. In addition to pride, we collected anger and fear measures to rule out explanations that negative emotions drive our proposed effects (adapted from Shaver et al. 1987).

Pride. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt proud of the company, using the same scale from Study 3. We averaged the items (α = .97), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of pride.

Anger. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt anger, hatred, and frustration (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .94), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of anger.

Fear. Participants were asked, when thinking about the attempt to implement the policy at their organization, to what extent they felt fear, alarm, and distress (3 items, 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). We averaged the items (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater levels of fear.

Support for the policy. Participants responded to the same measure as in Study 1 (α = .95), with higher numbers indicating greater likelihood of actions in support of the policy.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables are shown in Table 6.

Manipulation check. A manipulation check confirmed that participants in the high organization identification condition (M = 4.17, SD = .643) identified more with their organization than those in the low organization identification condition (M = 2.56, SD = 1.05; t(517) = -21.01, p < .001, *CI 95%* [-1.75, -1.45].

Support for the policy. We ran a linear regression, with organizational identification and feminist identification as moderators (0 = organization; 1 = feminist) and policy label as the independent variable (Figure 4). Two main effects emerged: as organizational identification increased, so did support for the policy (regardless of label, b = .52, SE = .15, t(511) = 3.48, p = .001, *CI 95%*[.23, .81]). Moreover, as feminist identification increased, so did support for the policy (regardless of label, b = .63, SE = .08, t(511) = 7.44, p < .001, *CI 95%*[.46, .80]). In line with H1a, a marginal three-way (organization identification x feminist identification x policy label) interaction emerged (b = .28, SE = .16, t(511) = 1.77, p = .077, *CI 95%*[-.03, .60]). As expected, in the high organizational identification condition when feminist identification was low (-1SD), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more

than the feminist-labeled policy, $b = -.80$, $SE = .22$, $t(511) = -3.72$, $p < .001$, *CI 95%*[-1.22, -.38]. One other effect also emerged: in the high organizational identification condition when feminist identification was moderate (mean level), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy, $b = -.33$, $SE = .15$, $t(511) = -2.24$, $p = .026$, *CI 95%*[-.62, -.04]. No other effects emerged.

Moderated mediation. We tested whether organizational pride would mediate the effects of labeling on support for the labeled policy, moderated by feminist identification and organizational identification. Following Preacher and colleagues (2007), we conducted a first-stage double moderated path analysis and tested for mediation using a series of linear regressions (see Table 7). The three-way (organization identification x feminist identification x policy label) effect on pride as the dependent variable, was significant ($b = .49$, $SE = .18$, $t(511) = 2.78$, $p = .006$, *CI 95%*[.14, .83]). Moreover, the conditional indirect effects of labeling on support via pride was examined at high and low levels of feminist identification and organizational identification using 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout and Bolger 2002). As theorized in H2b, the mediation occurred for participants in the high organizational identification condition when feminist identification was low (-1SD), such that participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy, *CI 95%*[-1.31, -.61]. We also tested whether feminist identity and organizational identity interacted with the label condition to influence anger or fear. In neither case was the interaction significant, all t's < 7.79, all p's > .22.

Study 4, in support of H1b, found that feminist identification and organizational identification moderated the relationship between policy labeling and support for the policy when organizational identification was high (+1SD) and feminist identification was low (-1SD), participants supported the organizationally-labeled policy more than the feminist-labeled policy. Even in high organizational identification, when feminist identification was at mean levels, participants supported the organization label policy more than the feminist labeled policy. We also found support that pride mediated the moderated effects (H2b), such that mediation occurred for participants in the high organizational identification condition when feminist identification was low.

DISCUSSION

Gaining support for organizational changes from employees within organizations is instrumental to movement success (Binder 2002; Milkis and Tichenor 2019, Raeburn 2004), yet it is often difficult to convert these individuals into allies (DeCelles et al. 2019). Moreover, organizational workplaces provide unique challenges in that the labels that activists usefully employ in other social contexts may be less effective or even polarizing in workplaces. Across four experiments and twenty qualitative interviews, we find evidence that the labels drawn from the women's movement such as Feminist and #MeToo can polarize the support of potential allies. Because employees vary in their levels of feminist identification, the connotations and valence of these terms for them vary as well. We demonstrate that labeled policies resonate with employees who identify as feminist, such that they are more likely to support labeled than unlabeled policies. However, for employees who do not identify as feminist, these labels increase resistance and reduce support as compared to when the same policies are unlabeled. These effects are not mediated by fear or anger, but rather by increases or reductions in pride in their organization, suggesting that positive emotions are crucial mechanisms for activists seeking to turn employees into movement allies.

Our work contributes to organizational theory and to work on social movements by theoretically and empirically bringing in psychological and organizational mechanisms to illuminate when and why employees are mobilized as supportive allies of a movement-led effort to implement movement-initiated policies. Past research on social movements and institutional change has shown the importance of movements mobilizing allies. These allies are instrumental for helping to bring credibility to the movement and legitimating a previously controversial policy (e.g., Briscoe and Safford 2008, Raeburn 2004). Despite the recognition that finding allies is critical for movement success, especially in the workplace, we have known little about how or why movements are successful at turning institutional insiders into allies. Our approach is to examine the micro-dynamics of ally mobilization. We focus on the labels that activists use to promote change and the emotions those labels trigger in potential allies. We find that while certain labels are beneficial to mobilizing people who already identify with the movement,

those same labels can be demobilizing for people who do not identify with the movement. This finding points to the potential for dissonance created in the kinds of discourse that activists use. Typically, members of social movements use labels that resonate with them, but they forget about the potential negative consequences those labels will have for those who do not identify with the movement. Thus, movement discourse has the potential to create roadblocks for mobilizing allies, especially in contexts where such mobilization is precarious given the illegitimate status of the movement. Our findings explain why Katzenstein (1998) found organizations to not be ideal habitats for feminist change, and more generally point to the difficulty that social movements face when translating discourse and labels used in the broader movement to workplace politics.

Our work complements past work on how emotions (i.e., fear) result in collective inaction by suggesting that positive emotions—in particular, pride in the organization's actions—are central in engendering collective action, particularly among constituents who are less identified with the relevant movement (DeCelles et al., 2020). This resonates with research showing that for stigmatized group members, pride in oneself and one's group is central to mobilizing (Stein 1975, Thoits 1990). For example, an important goal of the civil rights and gay rights movements involved transforming membership in stigmatized groups from sources of shame into pride (Britt and Heise 2000). Our work broadens these findings in suggesting that building pride, but in this case, in their organization, is also a useful mobilizing force even among dominant groups.

Our work also contributes to our understanding of why movements' efforts to implement new policies often fail (e.g., Kellogg, 2009). If allies are crucial for successful implementation, then movements' efforts to implement may often fail because they do not successfully change their discourse and use label that are more appropriate for the workplace context. Thus, the paper highlights how translation from one institutional setting to another (in this case, from a social movement to a workplace) leads to dissonance among the people who are best positioned to carry out policy implementation.

Finally, the paper illustrates the theoretical importance of discourse, labels and identity in motivating institutional change. Typically, organizational theorists highlight the cognitive effects of

labels, but our study points to the importance of labels in creating or hampering emotional reactions. Inasmuch as a label aligns with an employees' identity, it motivates those individuals to support the labeled policy. Thus, labels do more than draw attention to particular aspects of a policy; rather they create an emotional connection between the person and the labeled policy. This emotional connection is part of what drives institutional change inasmuch as it creates energy for the change among those who must carry out the change (Huy, 2002).

Future Directions

In beginning to outline mechanisms that help activists convert organizational insiders into allies, our findings open the door for a number of potentially fruitful future directions. One open question is whether feminist-labeled gain more positive associations with key terms when they actively support policies that are labeled with those terms, or might even identify more with the labels themselves. There is work suggesting identification and labeling connotations are intertwined, and that identification is associated with more positive label connotations (Whitson et al. 2019). Moreover, social movement theorists have suggested "publicly displaying a feature or action that is supposed to produce pride might produce pride even if none was felt initially" (Britt and Heise 2000, p. 252), falling in line with cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957). Thus, when feminist-labeled support labeled policies, the negative connotations they hold for the label may be ameliorated or even superseded by the more positive associations that accompany pride. Future work should explore whether supporting labeled policies will also shift identification with and the connotations of the labels themselves. This might be particularly important in the long run, as expressing support may eventually diminish the negative connotations feminist-labeled hold with labels such as feminism and #MeToo more broadly, as they find themselves supporting policies explicitly associated with these terms.

Another rich route of potential exploration focuses on emotional ambivalence and how it plays into decisions individuals make with regard to social movements. Ambivalence around identifying as a feminist arose with a number of our participants in the qualitative interviews; for example, Brett, who

worked in the service industry, noted, "*I don't know what I identify as, myself a feminist. My definition of a feminist is well, equal rights for women. If that's the definition then I'm a feminist, but I believe in women's rights. I don't know if I will say I'm a feminist. No, I don't know. I don't know all that that entails. But if it mostly means women should be treated equally as me as far as pay and all that kind of stuff, yes. But if there's more than that, I don't know what that is though. I think so. I don't know. Let's say no, that's a no cause I don't know everything. I don't want to claim something to not know fully what it is… so not fully."* In this statement the ambivalence is not subtext, but text, as the participant swings back and forth between identifying and not. While many people instinctively dislike feelings of ambivalence (van Harreveld et al. 2009), recent work suggests that ambivalence can, under certain conditions, lead to more flexible thinking (Rothman et al. 2017). Similarly, it is possible that allowing people to more openly share their ambivalence and concerns about the labels and terms being used might open the door to more creative forms of engagement, or the discovery of new paths via which they might identify with the labels or the movement at large.

While this paper focused on support for policies, future work can also help understand how a lack of feminist identification might lead to active opposition for labeled policies. We know that institutional insiders who would otherwise support a policy or activist effort sometimes withdraw from mobilization out of fear of negative consequences within the workplace (DeCelles et al. 2019). Similarly, institutional actors who do not identify with the movement, or feel active antipathy toward it, may under certain conditions elect not to engage in active opposition for the same reasons, namely, fear of negative consequences in the workplace. However, this does not close off options for more surreptitious methods of expressing their opposition (e.g., withdrawal, counterproductive work behaviors; see Greco et al. 2019 for a review).

Finally, it would useful to consider the influence of generational differences in the connotations that key labels hold for different individuals. Here, Tanya highlights the different expectations individuals of different generations hold for their workplace, noting that, "*Especially when you consider talking to 20 somethings about what they want out of an organization to go work for, you just can't ignore some of*

their needs and goals are and what the culture's like in the kind of organization they go to work for. So meeting more progressive policies, just like the maternity leave policy, also extrapolate into just commitment to the community." It is likely that these differing expectations also hold implications for how organizational efforts which are outgrowths of particular activist movements are received and interpreted.

Conclusion

We used a mixed-methods approach to explore influences on potential movement allies' support for organizational policies that benefit women when they are labeled as opposed to unlabeled. Labeled policies increase support among institutional insiders who identify as feminist. However, labeling policies may reduce support from feminist-labeled unless other values, such as loyalty to the organization, are emphasized. Our findings have broad implications for social movements in general, as these movements increasingly target organizational contexts as new arenas in which to pursue their wider goals.

Table 1

Demographics for Qualitative Interviews

Gender	Women	Men	
	14	6	
Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Caucasian
	1	4	10
	Hispanic	Middle East	Mixed
	2	1	2
	Mean	SD	Range
Age	41.90	11.71	22-63
Organizational Tenure	18.95	11.41	2-40

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Experiment 1

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Policy Label (0 = Unlabeled; 1 = Labeled)	--	--	--			
2. Feminist Identification	2.75	1.30	-.006	--		
3. Support for the Policy	3.42	1.35	-.061	.475**	--	
4. Age	35.42	10.89	.023	-.163**	-.123*	--
5. Gender	--	--	.001	.246**	.174**	.009

Note. N = 394. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Experiment 2

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. Policy Label (0 = Unlabeled; 1 = Labeled)	--	--	--						
2. Feminist Identification	2.97	1.34	.058	--					
3. Pride	4.51	1.85	.004	.501**	--				
4. Anger	2.32	1.76	.078*	.097**	-.041	--			
5. Fear	2.39	1.81	.073*	.100**	-.027	.900**	--		
6. Support for the Policy	3.65	1.41	-.041	.595**	.714**	.171**	.125*	--	
7. Age	34.51	10.01	.-.053	-.026	.027	-.079*	-.096**	.033	--
8. Gender	--	--	-.003	.270**	.127**	-.169**	-.145**	.058**	.079*

Note. N = 724. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 4

First stage and direct effect moderated path analysis results for support for the policy, Experiment 2

		Pride				
Mediator variable model	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	**95% CIs**	R^2
Constant	4.55	.08	54.60	< .001	[4.38; 4.71]	
Policy label	-.10	.12	-.81	.418	[-.33; .14]	
Feminist identification	.51	.06	8.55	< .001	[.40; .63]	
Policy label x Feminist identification	.39	.09	4.39	< .001	[.21; .56]	
						.27
Dependent variable model						
Constant	1.69	.11	15.16	< .001	[1.47; 1.91]	
Policy label	-.02	.07	-.33	.741	[-.16; .11]	
Feminist identification	.25	.04	6.69	< .001	[.18; .32]	
Policy label x Feminist identification	.06	.05	1.12	.27	[-.04; .16]	
Pride	.44	.02	19.80	< .001	[.39; .48]	
						.56
Conditional Effect	***B***	**Boot SE**			**95% CIs**	
Low feminist identification	-.10	.10			[-.30; -.09]	
High feminist identification	.19	.06			[.07; .30]	
Index of moderated mediation	**Index**	**Boot SE**			**95% CIs**	
	.17	.04			[.09; .25]	

Note. N = 724. Reported regression coefficients are unstandardized. 95% Confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated based on 5,000 resamples. 2-tailed t-tests.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Experiment 3

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Policy Label (0 = Org; 1 = Fem)	--	--	--							
2. Feminist Identification	2.95	1.34	-.055	--						
3. Organizational Identification	3.55	0.84	-.060	.151**	--					
4. Pride	4.66	1.78	-.156**	.483**	.401**	--				
5. Anger	2.78	2.01	.043	.201**	.078	.033	--			
6. Fear	2.86	1.98	.056	.221**	.134**	.064	.898**	--		
7. Support for the Policy	3.85	1.46	-.101*	.467**	.476**	.795**	.142**	.188**	--	
8. Age	35.33	10.15	-.012	-.128*	.084	-.071	-.146**	-.172**	-.078	--
9. Gender	--	--	-.068	.269**	-.031	.009	-.095	-.120*	-.044	.048

Note. N = 383. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Experiment 4

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Policy Label (0 = Org; 1 = Fem)	--	--	--							
2. Org Identification (0 = Low 1 = High)	--	--	-.014	--						
3. Feminist Identification	2.85	1.31	-.029	.048	--					
4. Pride	4.69	1.75	-.177**	.379**	.518**	--				
5. Anger	2.31	1.77	.059	-.122**	-.054	-.253**	--			
6. Fear	2.40	1.83	.090	-.120**	-.057	-.230**	.889**	--		
7. Support for the Policy	3.58	1.47	-.086	.167**	.562**	.748**	-.078	-.051	--	
8. Age	36.26	10.66	-.039	.020	-.110*	-.089*	-.070	-.066	-.099*	--
9. Gender	--	--	.022	.056	.292**	.123**	-.181**	-.194**	.117**	.008

Note. N = 519. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 7

First stage and direct effect moderated path analysis results for support for the policy, Experiment 4

		Pride				
Mediator variable model	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	**95% CIs**	R^2
Constant	2.61	.28	9.29	< .001	[2.06; 3.17]	
Policy label	-.96	.38	-2.54	.011	[-1.70; -.22]	
Organizational identification (OID)	2.32	.40	5.73	< .001	[1.53; 3.12]	
Feminist identification (FID)	.58	.09	6.25	< .001	[.40; .76]	
Policy label x FID	.20	.12	1.64	.103	[-.04; .44]	
Policy label x OID	-1.77	.55	-3.22	.001	[-2.85; -.69]	
FID x OID	-.31	.13	-2.37	.018	[-.56; -.05]	
Policy label x FID x OID	.49	.18	2.78	.006	[.14; .83]	
						.46
Dependent variable model						
Constant	.16	.22	.73	.467	[-.27; .58]	
Policy label	.20	.27	.75	.454	[-.33; .73]	
OID	-.08	.30	-.28	.777	[-.67; .50]	
FID	.30	.07	4.35	< .001	[.16; .43]	
Policy label x FID	-.04	.09	-.46	.649	[-.21; .13]	
Policy label x OID	.01	.39	.02	.985	[-.77; .78]	
FID x OID	-.08	.09	-.86	.390	[-.26; .10]	
Policy label x FID x OID	.005	.13	.04	.972	[-.24; .25]	
Organizational pride	.57	.03	18.25	< .001	[.51; .63]	
						.61
Conditional Effect	***B***	**Boot SE**			**95% CIs**	
Low FID, Low OID	-.44	.20			[-.82; -.05]	
Low FID, High OID	-1.17	.22			[-1.60; -.75]	
High FID, Low OID	-.06	.14			[-.33; -.20]	
High FID, High OID	.12	.08			[-.04; -.28]	
Index of moderated mediation	**Index**	**Boot SE**			**95% CIs**	
	.28	.11			[.06; .49]	

Note. N = 519. *Reported regression coefficients are unstandardized. 95% Confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated based on 5,000 resamples. 2-tailed t-tests.*

Figure 1. The effects of feminist identification and labeling on support for the policy, Experiment 1.

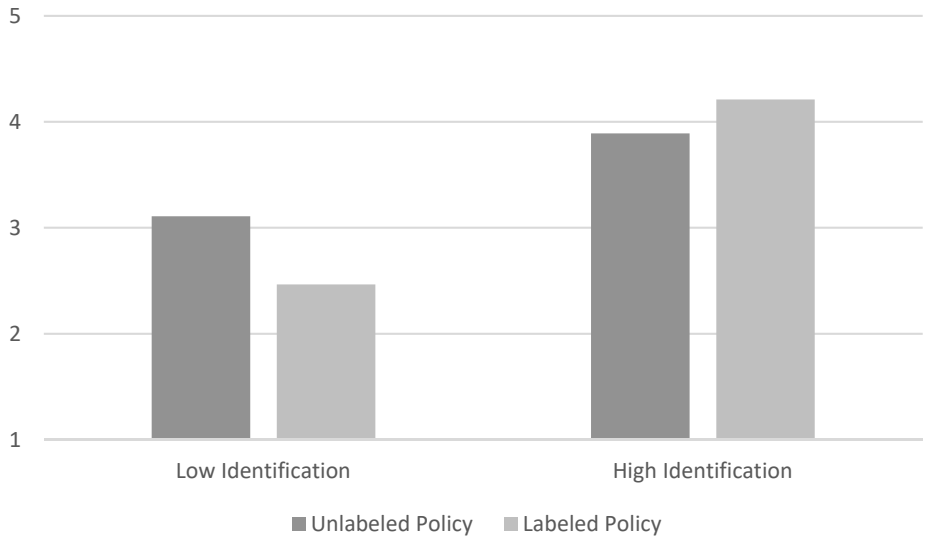


Figure 2. The effects of feminist identification and labeling on support for the policy, Experiment 2.

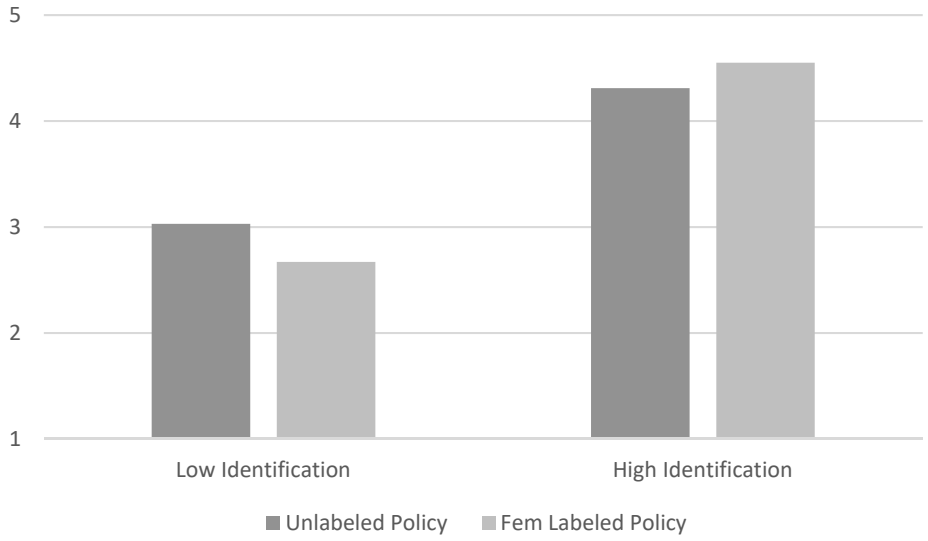


Figure 3. The effects of organization identification, feminist identification, and labeling on support for the policy, Experiment 3.

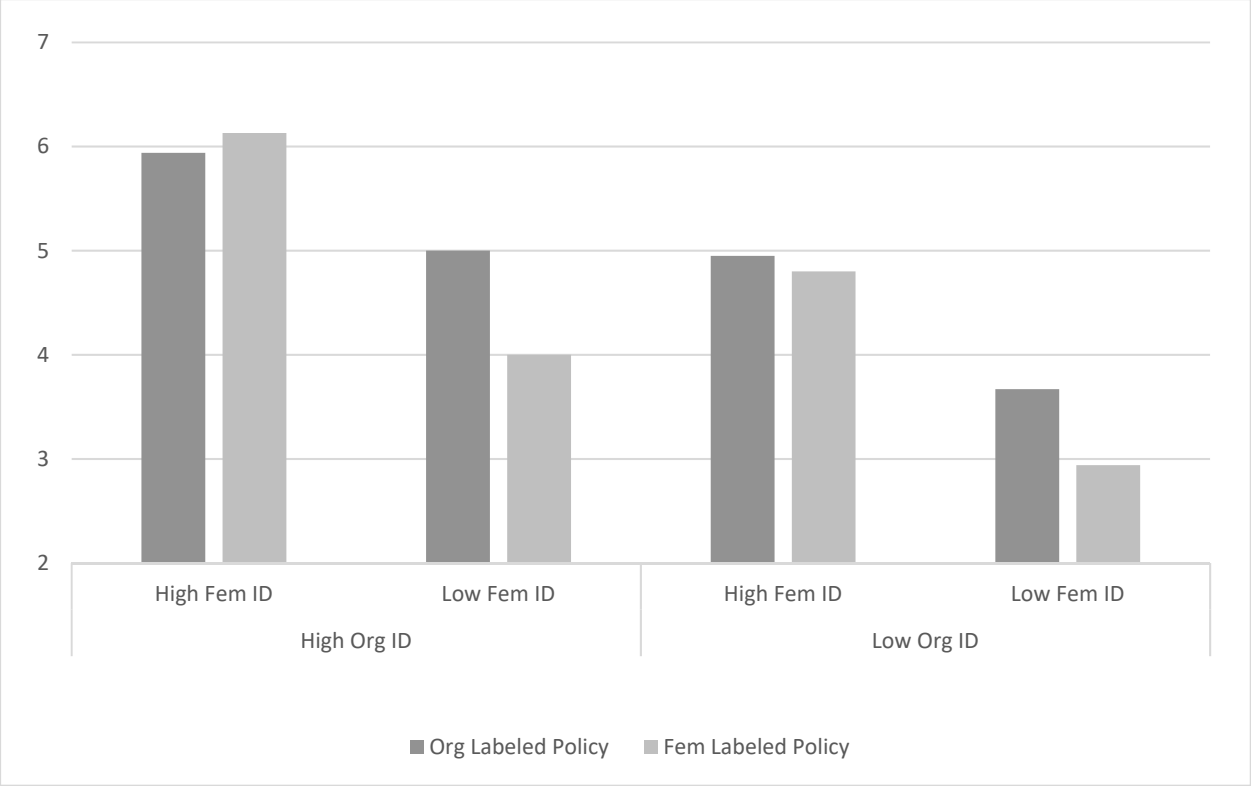
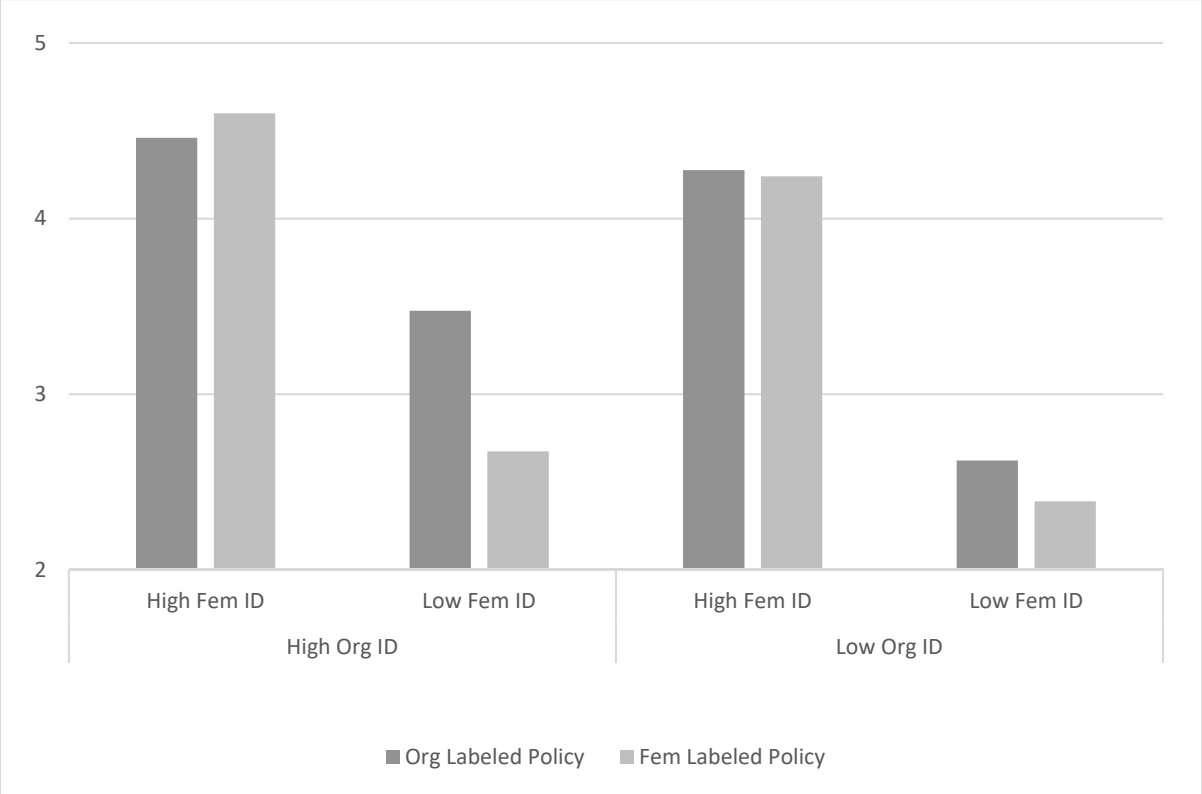


Figure 4. The effects of organization identification, feminist identification, and labeling on support for the policy, Experiment 4.



Footnotes

[1] To preserve anonymity while easing reading comprehension, researchers assigned all participants in the qualitative interviews aliases.

[2] In the three experiments, we excluded participants who spent less than or greater than 2.5 standard deviations from the mean of the overall completion time for each experiment, in line with past research (e.g., Cave 1997, DePrince and Freyd 1999, Wagenmakers and Brown 2007, Whitson et al. 2019). This allows us to eliminate responses from outlier participants who spent too much or too little time in our experiments.

[3] We tested whether gender moderated the proposed effects in our studies—no interactions emerged in Studies 2 and 3. In Study 1, a three-way policy label x feminist identification x gender interaction emerged (b = -.42, SE = .19, t(386) = -2.28, p = .023, *CI 95%*[-.79, -.06]), such that the effects proposed in H1a emerged for men, but not with women. However, the two-way policy label x feminist identification interaction remained significant when gender was included in the model as a factor. Therefore, all tests are reported without gender as a moderator.

[4] We tested whether the type of policy influenced the interaction between feminist and identity and labeling—no interactions emerged. Therefore, all tests are reported without policy type as moderator.

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