

*Research Note: Feminism Through a Partisan Lens: How
Group Perceptions Shape Affect and Identity*

Anonymized for submission.

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Why do some individuals choose to identify as “feminist” while others choose to reject this label? In this note, we begin to unpack this by proposing one particular driver behind the rejection of the feminist label: group perceptions. In particular, we argue that perceptions of the vocalicity of feminists should shape people’s affect toward and willingness to affiliate with feminists, and that the effect of these perceptions should differ by partisanship. We examine these expectations using open-ended responses and a survey experiment from the 2021 Cooperative Election Study (N=1,000). We find that perceptions of feminists’ vocalicity shape feminist affect and identity and that changing these perceptions can even close the gap between Republicans’ and Democrats’ affect towards feminists. Our findings shed light on the currently extreme partisan differences in feminist identification as well as begin to uncover a sorely understudied, yet extremely important, political and social identity.

Key Words: American politics; group identity; political behavior; feminism

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Joy Behar: Can I read you the definition of feminism? I just looked it up ... the definition is that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities.

Deborah Roberts: I'm not sure that I identify myself as a feminist even though by that definition I am ... it just feels like a very strong word. Although my daughter says you are a feminist Mom, you just dont like to wear the label.¹

– Excerpt from panel titled, “Is ‘Feminism’ a Bad Word?” on ABC’s The View

Introduction

The above exchange exemplifies a paradox in American public opinion. Like Roberts, Americans are by and large supportive of gender equality, with one poll finding 91% of Americans believe it is “very important” women have the same rights as men. Popular discourse often conceptualizes feminism in these simple terms, emphasizing the belief in gender equality—like the definition provided by Behar. Yet, despite what appears to be widespread belief (at least in the abstract) in gender equality, public opinion polling consistently finds that few Americans describe themselves as feminist,^{2,3,4,5} and more describe feminists unfavorably than favorably (Huddy, Neely and Lafay, 2000). Even among those who believe *most* in women’s equality, feminists and feminism are not held in terribly high regard (Huddy, Neely and Lafay, 2000). What explains this contradiction? How is it that Americans are supportive of the basic principles of feminism, yet hostile towards the label?

Prior work has identified factors such as partisanship (Huddy, 2018), policy views (Conover, 1988; Cook and Wilcox, 1991), gender, race, educational background, and class (Rhodebeck, 1996) as predictors of feminist identification. Yet though canonical work in gender and politics identifies feminist consciousness as a consequential political identity that influences policy (Conover, 1988), understanding when and why people develop this identity in the first place remains an area for growth. In this note, we explore how conceptions of feminists influence feminist identification. To the degree that Americans hold unsavory views about feminists, we argue these views influence feelings towards the group and willingness to identify with it, as research tells us that individuals are hesitant to identify with groups they dislike or ascribe negative characteristics to (Klar and

¹Of course, the definition of feminism is more complex and debated. However, weven when conceptualized in the most simplistic terms – belief in gender equality – people (like Deborah Roberts) *still* hesitant to adopt the label despite agreeing with the sentiment.

²<https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/american-women-and-feminism>

³<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/feminism-project/poll/>

⁴<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/14/most-americans-support-gender-equality-even-if-they-dont-iden>

⁵<https://www.vox.com/2015/4/8/8372417/feminist-gender-equality-poll>

Krupnikov, 2016). Yet, as we argue, disrupting negative stereotypes about feminists may make individuals feel more warmly towards them, and in turn more likely to call *themselves* feminist.

Based on open-ended responses we collected as part of the 2021 Cooperative Election Study (CES), we focus on one particular negative stereotype: feminist vocality. Combined with a pre-registered survey experiment, we find that providing examples of feminists that run counter to the stereotype of vocality can drastically improve feelings towards and willingness to affiliate with feminists. This finding is especially pronounced among Republicans, who are much less likely to identify as feminist to begin with. While our interest is in one particular group—feminists—our findings more generally indicate that while group perceptions play a powerful role in public opinion and identity formation, they are malleable—even in the current polarized political context.

Group Perceptions, Affect, and Identity

We expect how individuals perceive feminists—who they are and how they act—drives feminist affect and identity. Even when incorrect, group perceptions can be a powerful driver of behavior and attitudes (Ahler and Sood, 2018; Druckman et al., 2022; Klar and Krupnikov, 2016; Stauffer, 2021, N.d.). For example, Americans often view members of the opposing party as more extreme. These perceptions exacerbate affective polarization, as partisans often erroneously perceive the opposing party as more distant than it actually is (Ahler and Sood, 2018; Druckman et al., 2022). Just as perceptions about partisan politics shape attitudes and behaviors, stereotypes about racial minorities, women, and other historically marginalized groups influence support for social welfare policies and policies aimed at counteracting disparities (Cassese and Barnes, 2019; Kreitzer, Maltby and Smith, 2022), likely because Americans often see politics in group-based terms (Mason, 2018). We expect feminists to be another group that Americans have pre-conceived notions about, and that these beliefs underlie the hesitancy of many to wear the feminist label.

Not only do we expect Americans hold feminist stereotypes, but we also expect Americans *overestimate* the extent to which feminists actually *fit* these stereotypes. Research suggests individuals overestimate how many group members fit stereotypes (Ahler and Sood, 2018). And, as McCabe (2005) notes, “The backlash against feminism in the media and the relatively extreme positions taken by the more outspoken representatives of the feminist movement may have resulted in

feminism being equated with ‘radical’ or ‘militant.’” We thus expect people overestimate the number of feminists who embody negative stereotypes, and that disrupting this could lead to greater favorability and group association. We focus our attention here on one particular stereotype—that feminists are “loud” and/or “aggressive” (i.e. feminist vocality)—for two reasons. First, this stereotype came up frequently in open-ended responses we collected (more details below), reinforcing the observation that it is frequently ascribed to feminists in media and social discourse. Second, this stereotype is likely viewed negatively, especially among those who perceive feminists as politically incongruent. Research finds individuals do not like people who talk about politics frequently (Klar, Krupnikov and Ryan, 2018) or who view politics as central to their identity (Krupnikov and Ryan, 2022)—two characteristics people seem to assume feminists embody.

We expect this negative stereotype to be especially influential for Republicans, as people especially do not like politically invested and vocal individuals when they assume they disagree with them (Klar, Krupnikov and Ryan, 2018; Krupnikov and Ryan, 2022). Because feminists are largely associated with the Democratic Party (e.g. Mason, 2018), Republicans likely assume feminists are extremely liberal Democrats. This perceived incongruence might compound negative reactions to “vocal” feminists, making Republicans especially resistant to the group and label—yet also capable of changing this once the stereotype is disrupted.⁶ Thus, we expect many individuals hold a “vocal feminist” stereotype and this makes Republicans in particular less warm towards feminists. This in turn should influence identification because research finds how favorably one views a group influences their likelihood of affiliation. Thus, group perceptions should shape both affect and affiliation.

Design & Analysis

To test our expectations, we fielded a survey to 1,000 respondents as part of the 2021 Cooperative Election Study (CES). The CES is an online, nationally-representative sample of American adults. We asked respondents whether they consider themselves to be “feminist,” “anti-feminist,” or “neither.” Consistent with prior polling with similarly worded questions (ANES 2021), the majority of our respondents *did not* identify as feminist (63.86% “neither;” 5.61% “anti-feminist”) and just

⁶Of course, a perceived incongruence between Republican policies and feminism may be accurate, but disrupting stereotypes may nonetheless make Republicans more positive towards feminists.

30.53% identified as “feminist.” For our purposes, we created a binary measure capturing whether respondents identified as feminist (feminist= 1; not=0). We also note that there are clear partisan differences: while 49.09% of Democrats identified as feminist, just 6.78% of Republicans did.⁷

In order to unpack *why* certain individuals accept or reject the feminist label, we also included an open-ended question asking respondents to, “Please explain why you do or do not identify as a feminist.”⁸ Among those who did *not* identify as feminist, a common theme to emerge was feminists being “aggressive,” “overly assertive,” “obnoxious,” and “loud” in advocating for their beliefs. For example, one respondent stated:

“I’m a woman but not a feminist - I think some feminists are too vocal - I think women should hav3 (sic) equal opportunities and equal pay, but I don’t like the term ‘feminist.’”

Another respondent noted:

“Feminists tend to be overly aggressive and take on make (sic) traits to try to force their way. They are distasteful people.”

The open-ended responses suggest part of the hesitancy to identify is rooted in beliefs about who feminists are and how they act. To examine if changing these beliefs can lead individuals to adopt warmer feelings towards feminists, and perhaps identify with them, we turn to a survey experiment. After answering the two aforementioned questions, we asked respondents to report feeling thermometer scores towards different types of feminists.⁹ Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. The *control* used the same wording as the American National Election Studies (ANES), asking respondents to rate “feminists” (*control*). The two treatment conditions asked respondents to rate “feminists who [**rarely/frequently**] talk about feminist issues” (the *quiet* and *vocal* conditions).

Respondents in the *control* were also asked, “Does the way feminists act influence your likelihood of identifying as a feminist” (options: yes, definitely; maybe; and no). In the treatment conditions respondents were also asked, “If most feminists [*rarely / frequently*] talked about feminist issues, would you be more or less likely to identify as a feminist” (options: more likely; less likely; the same).

⁷Being a Democrat (compared to Republican) predicts identifying as feminist in logistic regression ($p < .001$).

⁸To avoid priming, we randomized the order of questions. Results are similar regardless of ordering.

⁹Four respondents did not provide answers to the feeling thermometer questions.

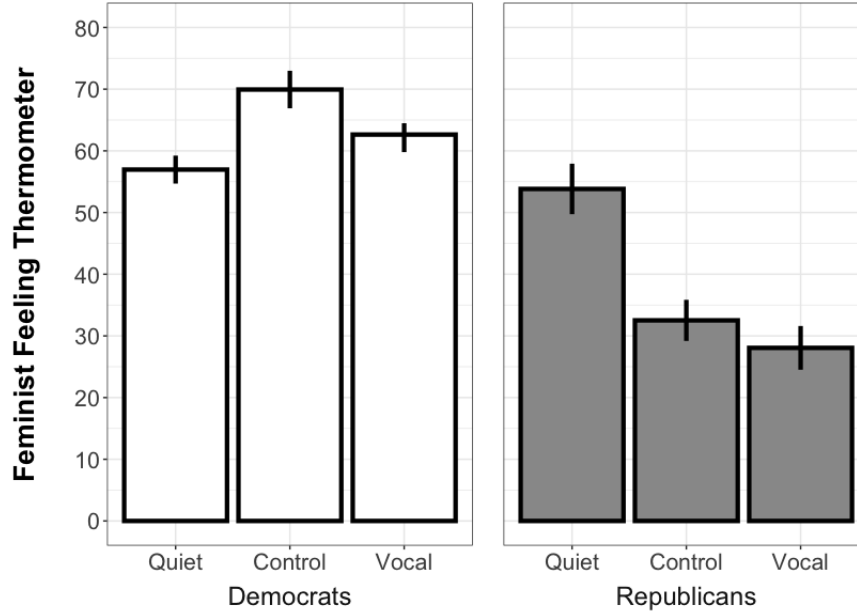


Figure 1: Feeling thermometer scores for “feminists” across condition by respondent party. Bars represent 84% confidence intervals. In cases where 84% confidence intervals do not overlap, we can conclude means are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level

Consequences for Affect

First, we examine how group perceptions shape feelings towards feminists, comparing how respondents feel about feminists in the control versus treatment conditions. On average, people feel most positively towards quiet feminists (mean=55.80) and most negatively towards vocal feminists (mean=48.11), with the *control* in between (mean=51.40; see Table A1). While the *quiet* and *control* are significantly different from one another ($p=.043$), the *vocal* and *control* are not ($p=.171$). This suggests that unless given information to the contrary, respondents assume feminists *are* vocal. However, giving information about “quiet” feminists counters this assumption and leads to more positive attitudes.

Next, we examine how the effect of these group perceptions changes by partisanship (Figure 1). We predicted Republicans would be especially turned off by vocal feminists. Results support this expectation. While Republicans did rate the vocal feminist slightly lower than the *control* (-4.46 points) the difference between these conditions was not significant ($p=.198$). Again, this suggests that when asked to think about “feminists,” Republican think about “loud” or “vocal” feminists and making judgments accordingly. However, when we counter this belief, we see a

dramatic upward shift in ratings among Republicans. Compared to the control, our quiet feminist is rated 21.32 points higher—crossing the midpoint of the thermometer and indicating general warmth as opposed to coolness. Relative to *vocal*, quiet feminists see a 92% increase in their feeling thermometer scores. Republicans in this condition are *more similar to Democrats* (regardless of condition) than their co-partisans in *control* and *vocal* conditions. Among participants in the *quiet* condition, partisanship no longer predicts feelings towards feminists ($p=.308$), suggesting updating perceptions of feminist behavior can close gaps between the two partisan groups' affect.

A different story emerges among Democrats. Interestingly, for this group, the most popular feminist is the one in our *control*. Democratic respondents rate the “feminist” 7.30 points higher than “vocal feminist” and 12.98 points higher than the “quiet feminist.” Thus, it appears Democrats are less likely to equate feminists with particular vocality behaviors—or at least not with the same consistency. Further, where Republicans overwhelmingly did not consider themselves feminists (making it easier to apply negative outgroup stereotypes), almost half of our Democratic respondents identified as feminist. For these respondents, vocality may be seen more as a positive trait because it implies advancing a shared cause and set of beliefs—thus, they may place positive symbolic meaning in terms like “vocal” and “loud.” For Democrats who do *not* identify as feminists, however, stereotypes related to vocality may remain negative. This could explain why the results indicate Democrats punish feminists no matter what descriptor is affixed to them: Democrats in our *control* may have defaulted to thinking about their “idealized” version of a feminist. Given the near 50-50 split between feminists and non-feminists, any descriptor was likely to lead some subset of Democrats to proffer lower thermometer scores, whether that be feminist Democrats punishing quiet feminists or non-feminist Democrats punishing vocal ones.

A deeper look at the data for Democratic respondents suggests this is what occurred—that indeed Democrats are more divided in their assumptions and expectations of feminists. Among Democratic *non-feminists*, the quiet feminist is effectively viewed as equivalent to the *control* ($p=.759$) and the vocal feminist *is* punished (6.63 points lower, $p=.078$). Among Democratic *feminists* however, the *quiet* feminist is viewed least favorably. For these respondents, quiet feminists are rated -27.89 points lower than the *control* ($p<.001$). While Democratic feminists also punish vocality (-7.19, $p=.005$), this effect is much smaller than for the quiet feminist. This result aligns with findings that people punish political in-group members who fail to act like “correct”

group members (Krupnikov and Ryan 2022)—Democratic feminists might view feminists who fail to talk about (what they view as) important issues negatively because they are not fighting for “the cause.”¹⁰

Overall, these findings are consistent with our general expectations: how feminists act shapes group affect. This is true for both parties, even if the ways this relationship manifests differ.

Consequences for Identity

Next, we examine how group perceptions shape willingness to identify as feminist. We first look at responses to the conditional identity question in the *control*. We find 27.96% of respondents say their willingness to identify with the group is “definitely” shaped by how feminists act and another 25.23% say it “maybe” is. For Republicans, these respective percentages change to 35.85% and 19.81% (22.92% and 31.64% for Democrats).

Breaking responses in our treatment groups down by partisanship, we see that Republicans say “less likely” *far* more often in *vocal* (51.46%) than in *quiet* (15.12%) and say “more likely” more often in *quiet* (12.79%) than in *vocal* (3.88%). The gap between the more and less likely responses in *vocal* is almost half the scale: while a whopping 51.46% of Republicans said they would be *less* likely to identify as feminist if most feminists were vocal, only 3.88% say they would be *more* likely to. Our previous findings suggest the low affiliation among Republicans is partly due to their assumption feminists are vocal. Thus, their reporting more vocal feminists would *further* decrease their likelihood of affiliation is notable.

Again, while findings for Republicans are clear, findings for Democrats deserve further research. While Democrats say “less likely” more often in *vocal* (19.64%) than in *quiet* (15.64%), they also say “more likely” more often in *vocal* (23.81%) than in *quiet* (8.38%)—suggesting Democratic feminists might be reacting negatively to quiet feminists, like in the previous analysis. Indeed, we find more Democratic feminists said they would be more likely to identify as feminist if most feminists were vocal (38.75%) than quiet (11.11%). Similarly, more Democratic feminists said they would be *less* likely to identify if most feminists were quiet (17.78%) than vocal (8.75%).

As a last step, we examine how individual affect towards feminists predicts willingness to

¹⁰One might wonder, then, if this is just a story about feminists versus non-feminists rather than a story about partisanship and feminism. We do not find this to be the case (see Appendix).

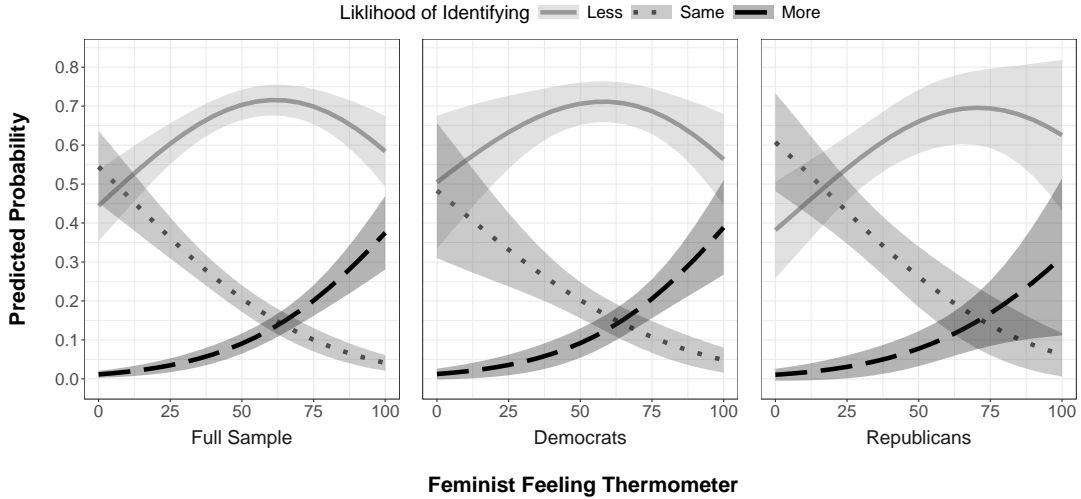


Figure 2: The effect of affect on willingness to identify as feminist for full sample and by party

identify with the group. We expect that how much one likes quiet or vocal feminists is correlated with the likelihood of affiliating with that group based on its composition (i.e. if most of the group were quiet or vocal). This is exactly what we find (see Figure 2)—feeling more warmly towards quiet(vocal) feminists predicts respondents stating they are more likely to identify if most feminists were quiet(vocal), and liking quiet(vocal) feminists *less* predicts respondents saying they would be *less* likely to identify if most feminists were quiet(vocal).¹¹ To test this more thoroughly, we run mediation analysis. Here, we find the *quiet* and *vocal* treatments influenced feminist identification (partly for Democrats but largely for Republicans) through changing respondents’ affect towards feminists (see Appendix).

Conclusion

In this piece we aimed to understand why so few Americans identify as feminist despite overwhelming endorsement of gender equality. We found that perceptions of feminists (specifically whether they are “vocal” or “quiet”) play an important role in Americans’ willingness to affiliate with feminists—particularly among Republicans. While Republicans appear to assume feminists are vocal, and dislike them as a result, they feel much more warmly towards quiet feminists and are more likely to *identify themselves* as feminist if they believe most feminists fit this description.

¹¹Respective coefficients of thermometers in multinomial logits: .03, $p < .001$., -.03, $p < .001$.

These findings suggest that one way to close the gap in partisan affect towards feminists is by disrupting stereotypes about the behaviors of “typical feminists.” At the same time however, important questions remain. For example, how does policy influence these dynamics? And, how do other (mis)perceptions of feminists shape affect and identity? Further, how does one’s social network shape these perceptions and thus affect and affiliation? Lastly, and importantly, why do a shockingly significant number (50.91%) of *Democrats*—whose goals are largely aligned with feminists—*not* identify as feminist? We leave this and other questions for future research.

The fact that so many Americans reject the feminist label presents an opportunity for political opponents to paint feminists as a radical minority attempting to subvert preferences of the majority. This gives opponents of women’s rights leverage to gain support for their cause by tethering opposing views to “feminists,” thus priming many Americans to oppose causes or policies they might otherwise be inclined to support. This becomes even more problematic given the partisan gap, as achieving gender equality cannot be done without bridging partisans who share many (though not all) of these goals. In a moment when questions of women’s social and political equality have become particularly salient, understanding who identifies as feminist—and why—is important.

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Appendix

Survey

Randomly order the following two questions:

- *Feminist ID*: Do you consider yourself a feminist, an anti-feminist, or neither of these? [feminist / anti-feminist / neither]
- *Open-Ended*: Please explain why you do or do not identify as a feminist: [long open-ended]

Random assignment to one of the following three conditions:

- *Control Condition*: We'd like to get your feelings toward some people and groups who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person or group. Ratings between 0 and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable and warm toward the group. You would rate them at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them. How would you rate feminists? [feeling thermometer]
- *Quiet Treatment*: We'd like to get your feelings toward some people and groups who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person or group. Ratings between 0 and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable and warm toward the group. You would rate them at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them. How would you rate feminists who **rarely** talk about feminist issues? [feeling thermometer]
- *Vocal Treatment*: We'd like to get your feelings toward some people and groups who are in the news these days using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person or group. Ratings between 0 and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable and warm toward the group. You would rate them at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward them. How would you rate feminists who **frequently** talk about feminist issues? [feeling thermometer]

For control group:

- *Conditional ID*: Does the way feminists act influence your likelihood of identifying as a feminist? [yes, definitely / maybe / no]

For quiet treatment group:

- *Conditional ID*: If most feminists **rarely** talked about feminist issues, would you be more or less likely to identify as a feminist? [more likely / less likely / the same]

For vocal treatment group:

- *Conditional ID*: If most feminists **frequently** talked about feminist issues, would you be more or less likely to identify as a feminist? [more likely / less likely / the same]

Mediation Analysis

In the main text, we found when individuals were primed to think about “quiet” feminists (as opposed to “vocal” feminists or feminists generally) they expressed greater feelings of warmth towards—and willingness to identify with—feminists as a group. After examining partisan heterogeneity, we found this effect was driven by Republican respondents, whereas results for Democratic respondents were more nuanced.

In the analyses in the main text, we treat affect towards feminists and feminist identification as distinct, analyzing each of these outcomes separately. However, we also argued theoretically these concepts are linked, such that higher (lower) levels of affect towards feminists should lead to greater (less) willingness to adopt the label for oneself. In this respect, there are two potential avenues through which our treatments might influence individual willingness to identify as feminist. The first is directly. The second is indirectly by changing individuals’ feelings about feminists. Theoretically, this linkage makes intuitive sense. For ease of interpretation and readability, however, in the main text we present simplified analyses in which the path of treatment \rightarrow affect \rightarrow identification is left theoretical and affect and identification are analyzed independently. In this section, we more formally test the link between these two outcomes through mediation analysis (see Imai, Keele and Tingley 2010).

Mediation analysis requires the estimation of two models. In the first model, the mediator (in our case affect towards feminists) is regressed on the treatment. In the second model,

the outcome (in our case feminist identification) is regressed on the treatment *and* the mediator. Estimating these models as a system, researchers can then estimate both the direct and indirect effects of the treatment. In our case, an indirect effect would represent the extent to which our treatments shaped feminist identification due to changes in affect towards feminists. Direct effects would represent the extent to which our treatments influenced identification through any other means.

Here we present the results of four mediation analyses: 1) models where the outcome variable is a binary indicator capturing whether Democratic respondents were *more* likely to identify as feminist (as opposed to “less” or “about the same”); 2) models where the outcome variable is a binary indicator capturing whether Democratic respondents were *less* likely to identify as feminist (as opposed to “more” or “about the same”); 3) models where the outcome variable is a binary indicator capturing whether Republican respondents were *more* likely to identify as feminist (as opposed to “less” or “about the same”); and 4) models where the outcome variable is a binary indicator capturing whether Republican respondents were *less* likely to identify as feminist (as opposed to “more” or “about the same”).¹² We estimate each set of models via 10,000 simulations and use bootstrapped standard errors.

Figure 3 presents the direct and indirect effects for each partisan group across outcomes. We turn first to the results where the outcome captures whether respondents reported being *more* likely to identify as feminist. Here, we find the results generally support our conclusions from the main text. For Democratic respondents, we see a positive and significant indirect effect, suggesting willingness to identify as feminist is at least partially attributable to more positive feelings associated with vocal feminists. However, we also see a positive and significant *direct* effect, suggesting our treatment had an impact on identification outside of its effect on affect. For Republicans, we see the opposite pattern, also consistent with our findings from the main text. For Republicans, receiving the vocal treatment dampens affect towards feminists, which in turn decreases the likelihood an individual reports being more likely to identify as feminist. The absence of a significant direct effect suggests, for Republicans, the effects of the treatments on identification are largely attributable to underlying feelings about the group.

Next we turn our attention to results when the outcome is being “less likely” to identify as

¹²For ease of interpretation we use linear probability models to estimate these effects.

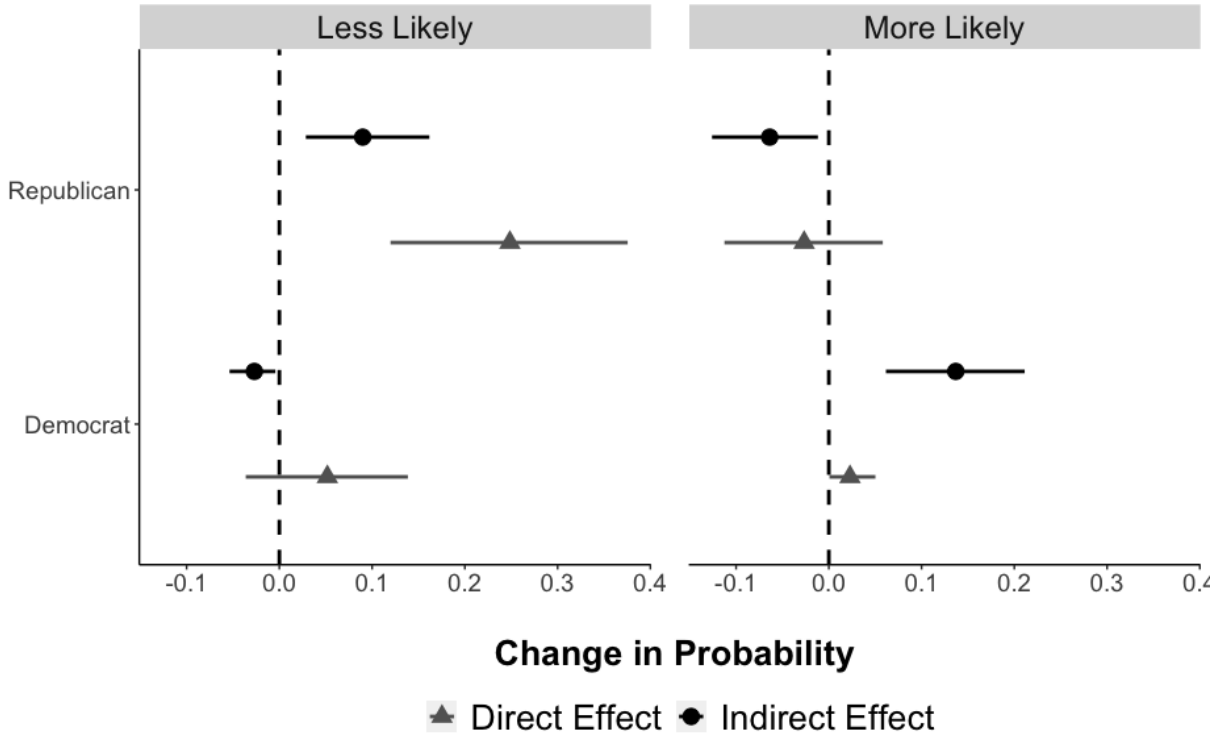


Figure 3: Mediation Results

feminist. Here again, the results lend themselves to similar conclusions. For Democrats, receiving the *vocal* treatment indirectly reduces the likelihood of individuals saying they would be less likely to identify as feminist. In contrast, for Republicans, receiving this treatment *increases* the likelihood of respondents saying they would be less likely to identify as feminist.

0.1 Mediation Sensitivity Analysis

The preceding discussion relied on a series of mediation analyses to more formally test the extent to which increasing (decreasing) positive affect towards feminists leads to an increased (decreased) willingness to adopt the feminist label. We estimated these models using the procedures outlined in Imai, Keele and Tingley (2010). Central to this endeavor, however, is the assumption of *sequential ignorability*, which requires two conditions be met. First, there must be no unobserved pre-treatment covariates that influence *both* the treatment (the experimental conditions) and the mediator (feeling thermometer scores) or the outcome (self-identification). Second, there must be no unobserved pre-treatment covariates that influence *both* affect towards feminists and individual willingness to identify as a feminist.

The assumption of sequential ignorability is quite a strong assumption. In our case, because respondents were randomly assigned to treatment conditions, our analysis should meet the first condition of sequential ignorability. However, because our mediator was *not* randomly assigned, it is possible some unobserved factor is influencing both affect towards feminists and feminist self-identification, which would violate the second requirement of sequential ignorability. Unfortunately, there is no way to directly test whether this assumption is met in our analysis. However, we *can* assess the robustness of our results to the violation of this assumption using sensitivity analyses.

For each of our four outcomes of interest (models 1 through 4, from above: for both Democrats and Republicans, the propensity to be *more* or *less* likely to identify as a feminist), we calculate the estimated indirect effect of receiving the *vocal* condition (compared to the *quiet* condition) as a function of the correlation between error terms for: 1) models in which the outcome is feeling thermometer scores; and 2) models in which the outcome is being more (less) likely to identify as feminist. This correlation is labeled ρ .

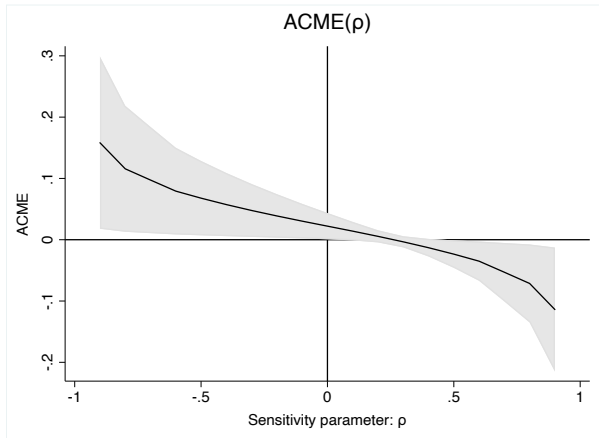
In Figures 4 and 5, we plot the estimated indirect effects across the range of ρ , which allows us to see how large ρ would need to be before we would expect an effect of 0 or an effect in the opposite direction of the one estimated in our models. Small values of ρ indicate small violations of sequential ignorability—in cases where ρ is small and the expected effect is 0, this would indicate that the relatively minor violations of sequential ignorability would invalidate the results. In contrast, higher values of ρ indicate findings that are more robust to the violation of sequential ignorability.

We begin by examining the sensitivity of our results predicting whether respondents reported being *more* likely to identify. These results are presented in Figures 4a and 4b. Again, in this case, the treatment is receiving the *vocal* feminist condition as opposed to the *quiet* feminist condition. Here we see that among Democrats, we would expect the ACME to be zero when ρ is .28. For Republicans, we would expect a zero effect at $\rho = .31$. This indicates that mediation results are more robust for Republicans, which is consistent with our expectations and findings in the main text.

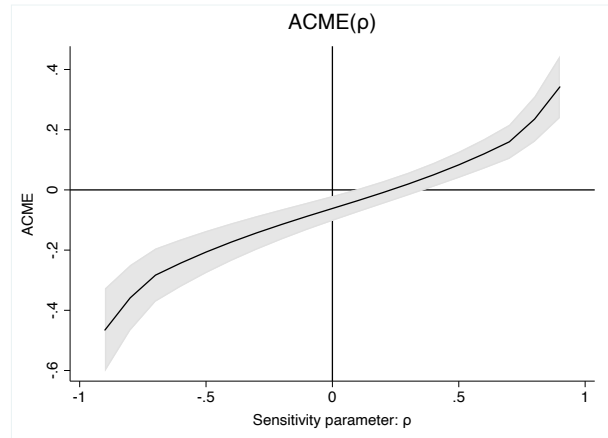
Figures 5a and 5b present the same sensitivity analyses, but for the mediation models where the outcome is whether respondents report being *less* likely to identify as feminist (as opposed to *more* likely, like in Figures 4a and 4b). Like in the previous analyses, the results appear to

be moderately robust to violations of the sequential ignorability assumption, though moreso for Republicans. This is again consistent with expectations and findings in the main text.

Thus, our findings suggest that the quiet and vocal feminist treatments influenced feminist identification (partly for Democrats and largely for Republicans) through changing respondents' affect towards feminists as a group. When respondents felt more warm towards feminists (i.e., when Democrats were responding to vocal feminists and Republicans were responding to quiet feminists), they were then subsequently more likely to identify as feminist. Conversely, when respondents felt more *cold* towards feminists (i.e., when Democrats were responding to quiet feminists and Republicans were responding to vocal feminists), they were then subsequently *less* likely to identify as feminist. This is consistent with our theoretical argument from the main text.

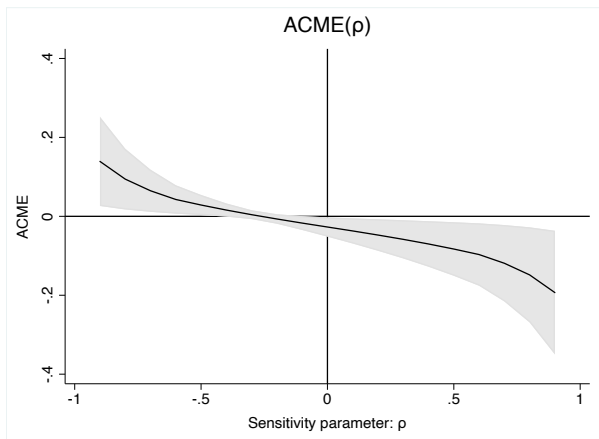


(a) Democrats

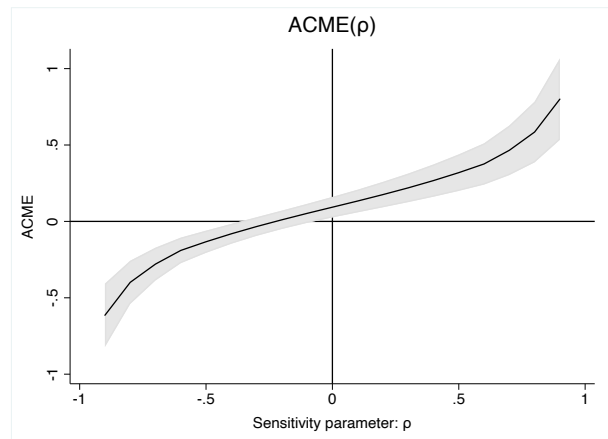


(b) Republicans

Figure 4: Sensitivity Analysis: More Likely to Identify



(a) Democrats



(b) Republicans

Figure 5: Sensitivity Analysis: Less Likely to Identify