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M. Brielle Harbin & Michele F. Margolis

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Nobody's free until everybody's free: how feminist identification influences white Americans' willingness to recognize and respond to racial discrimination

M. Brielle Harbin ^a and Michele F. Margolis^b

^aDepartment of Political Science, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, USA; ^bDepartment of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

ABSTRACT

While a long history of Black feminist thought grapples with the relationship between gender and racial oppression, both historical and present-day examples showcase how white feminists often struggle to make this connection. In this study, we examine the relationship between white Americans' feminist identification and perceiving discrimination toward other groups. Specifically, we investigate how identifying in feminist terms, together with the clarity of cues regarding racial bias in decision-making, influence white Americans' ability to see gender and racial discrimination as interconnected phenomena and react accordingly. Results of both correlational and experimental analyses suggest that white respondents who identify strongly as feminists are more likely than their non- and weak feminist counterparts to perceive racial discrimination both when racial bias is a clearly defined factor in decision-making as well as in cases where the influence of race is more ambiguous. These findings suggest that adopting subgroup identities may, in some cases, heighten awareness about the discrimination faced by racial and ethnic minorities among racially advantaged group members. Recognizing discrimination is a necessary precursor to forming broad, diverse coalitions around racial injustice and inequality. Our results suggest that some white feminists may be well-suited to join the coalition.

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A recurring critique of identity-based progressive movements in the United States is that they are often dominated by the interests and concerns of their most privileged members (Ehrenreich 2002). For instance, the women's movement centered the experiences of wealthy white women and the anti-racist movement did not fully acknowledge the role of sexism in the lives of Black women (Crenshaw 1989; Elliott 1996; Christensen 1997; Strolovitch, Wong, and Proctor 2017).¹ In each of these cases, the issue at hand is how more privileged members' other identities confer safety and comfort that they hesitate to concede – a reality that impedes efforts to forge meaningful political coalitions with relatively less privileged group members. Indeed, as Strolovitch (2008) explains,

CONTACT Brielle Harbin  harbin@usna.edu

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organizations often frame issues affecting their constituents in ways they hope will resonate broadly in the electorate and these choices can often include some subgroups while excluding others. Thus, the challenge for advocacy organizations is to “frame issues and deploy their demands for solidarity and framings of collective identity so that they benefit the least well-off by including identification not only *up* the hierarchy but *down* and *across* hierarchies as well” (Strolovitch 2008, 62).

These tensions are particularly rife within the women’s movement. For example, Mikki Kendall, a Black feminist writer, initially created the #solidarityisforwhitewomen hashtag to criticize the fact that white women overlook attacks on women of color by white self-proclaimed feminists. She also sought to highlight how feminists of color repeatedly hear that the racism they encounter “isn’t a feminist issue” (Kendall 2013). Along these lines, recent stories about the National Organization of Women (NOW) have made it clear that the largest feminist organization in the United States does not recognize the unique set of challenges that women of color face (Shugerman 2020). There are, on the other hand, women’s organizations that have made it their sole mission to address racism (Race To Dinner 2020) or have explicitly incorporated the values of racial justice into the fabric of their organization (Global Fund for Women 2020). These examples highlight the varied ways in which people see feminism and racial justice as interconnected.

In this study, we explore how members of one racially advantaged group in the United States – white men and women – come to perceive discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities.² Recent work on white racial identity focuses on how white in-group identification predicts white racial solidarity (Jardina 2018) but also racial sympathy – or concerns about the misfortunes African Americans face – and may also influence racial attitudes among a nontrivial number of white Americans (Chudy 2020).

Our work builds on these studies by exploring how white Americans’ non-racial identities may also be correlated with how they perceive circumstances facing racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Specifically, we investigate the relationship between white Americans’ feminist identification and perceptions of (and reactions to) racial and ethnic discrimination. While a long history of Black feminist thought grapples with the relationship between gender and racial oppression (Hooks 1984; Collins 1990), including whether Black feminist consciousness pulls Black women away from or reinforces their support for the fight for racial justice (Simien and Clawson 2004), the above examples highlight the need to further explore the tensions that can emerge among self-described white feminists. We examine the conditions that correspond with white feminists’ understanding of gender and racial discrimination as interlocking systems of oppression (Crenshaw 1989) and decision to react accordingly.

Drawing on findings from political science, psychology, and gender studies, we develop and test a series of hypotheses about the conditions under which feminist identification should be associated with greater attention to racial bias and an increased likelihood to perceive discrimination. Using both correlational and experimental data, we find that white respondents who identify as strong feminists are more likely than their non- and weak feminist counterparts to perceive racial discrimination both in situations where racial bias is quite likely a factor in decision-making as well as in cases where the influence of race is less pronounced. The results suggest that adopting certain subgroup identities can be associated with heightened awareness about the

discrimination faced by members of other stigmatized groups – in this case, racial and ethnic minorities.

Our study offers three main contributions. First, we provide a theoretical account that explains variation in racial attitudes among members of a racially advantaged group. While most scholars look at racial identity and racial attitudes in isolation, we find that belonging to a non-racial group that also faces stigmatization can help racially advantaged group members perceive discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities. Second, we provide evidence of how broader contextual factors – specifically the clarity of cues regarding the role of racial bias in decision-making – influence the formation of these perceptions. Finally, our study offers a much-needed extension to research in the liberal feminist tradition by demonstrating that feminist identification is consequential beyond the sphere of gender politics; feminism can, in some cases, help advance the agenda of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Indeed, Black feminist scholars have long highlighted the inextricable link between race and gender equality; however, research conducted in the liberal feminist tradition has often ignored these calls. Because successful progressive movements in American politics often require securing alliances across a range of social groups (Sonenshein 1993; Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001; Hancock 2011), the association between feminist identification and ability to perceive discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities would be a promising precursor to forming broad, diverse coalitions around racial injustice and inequality in the United States.

Linking feminist identification and racial attitudes

Who are feminists and why might they be sensitive toward discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities in the United States? Feminism represents a set of beliefs about gender equality (Williams and Wittig 1997; Henley et al. 1998; Aronson 2003; Huddy and Willmann 2017) as well as a group that one can be a part of and identify with (Williams and Wittig 1997; Burn, Aboud, and Moyles 2000; Zucker 2004; Breen and Karpinski 2008; Yoder, Tobias, and Snell 2011; Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017). As a group, feminists recognize and disagree with women's subjugated role in society and strive to promote equality among the genders.

A robust literature has shown how feminist identification is associated with distinctive values and political outlooks. For instance, Conover (1988) finds that strong feminist identity is positively correlated with a sense of egalitarianism, a lack of symbolic racism, a liberal ideology, an increased likelihood of rejecting moral traditionalism, and a tendency to adopt a modern conception of gender roles (see Schreiber 2013, 2014, 2018, for a critique of conflating feminism with support for modern gender roles). Feminist identity is also associated with liberal policy preferences – a relationship that holds for both white men and women (Cook and Wilcox 1991; Rhodebeck 1996).³ However, much of the work in this area focuses on attitudes toward gender-based policies (Burns and Gallagher 2010; Kane and Whipkey 2009). More, there are longstanding critiques that the feminist movement works specifically to empower white middle-class women while altogether ignoring women of color (Hooks 1984; Collins 1990; Fellows and Razack 1998) or race-based issues (Christensen 1997). The existing research leaves us wondering whether there is an association between

a feminist identity and racial attitudes, in general, and perceptions of discrimination against people of color, in particular.

What *specific* factors lead us to believe that feminist identification might uniquely position white women and men to recognize and collectively respond to discrimination? We argue that feminist identification should orient white Americans to stigmatization in ways that they may not otherwise be privy as racially advantaged group members. Indeed, previous work suggests that feminists – those who promote equality among the genders – are themselves a target of stigmatization. Specifically, individuals often adopt negative stereotypes of feminists, including the belief that they are angry, hypersensitive, and stubborn (Berryman-Fink and Verderber 1985; Twenge and Zucker 1999; Anderson 2009). These stereotypes are highly consequential. Previous work suggests that the negative stereotypes associated with feminists make individuals reluctant to identify in these terms (Roy, Weibust, and Miller 2007) and reduce their willingness to acknowledge sexism in social situations (Roy, Weibust, and Miller 2009). We suspect that these experiences convey information about being the target of stereotypes that, in turn, heighten white feminists' sensitivity to discrimination faced by other stigmatized groups in society.

Some of the earliest work on feminist identification and political attitudes provides preliminary evidence that feminists may better decipher discriminatory practices than their non-feminist counterparts. This work suggests that feminists are more likely to support liberal gender role attitudes and express support for feminist and other social justice issues (Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Cowan, Mestlin, and Masek 1992; Rhodebeck 1996; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Kelly and Gauchat 2016). As it relates to perceptions of disadvantaged groups and racial attitudes specifically, Conover (1988) finds that a strong feminist identity among women is positively correlated with expressing sympathy for the disadvantaged (996). Replicating this study on both women and men, Cook and Wilcox (1991) similarly find a positive correlation between feminist identification and liberal racial attitudes, as measured by support for providing government assistance to African Americans (1117). Thus, it appears that feminists may not only be more sensitive to gendered dynamics than their non-feminist counterparts, they may also be better equipped to see the plight of disadvantaged groups in society including racial and ethnic minorities.

The observation that feminists may be better equipped to perceive discrimination toward other groups motivates our interest in them as a potential political ally in racial justice movements. While members of disadvantaged groups perceiving discrimination against themselves and their group is an important precursor to efforts to politically mobilize (Masuoka 2006; Sanchez 2008; Hanjal and Lee 2011; Schildkraut 2011; Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo 2017), members of these groups can rarely bring about significant social change without support from non-group members. Indeed, allies are essential to building politically powerful blocs (Kaufmann 2003).

This reality prompts questions about the conditions that increase the likelihood of potential allies perceiving the plight of members of another group. The existing literature suggests that how members of one stigmatized group view members of another group depend on the situation (Gaertner et al. 1993; Branscombe and Wann 1994; Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Cadinu and Reggiori 2002; Leach et al. 2003; Hurwitz, Peffley, and Mondak 2015; Adida, Davenport, and McClendon 2016). When a policy domain is

zero sum – meaning that the benefits of one group must be taken from another – a conflictual relationship may emerge, whereas complementary relationships (Meier et al. 2004) and heightened awareness of other groups' plights (Hurwitz, Peffley, and Mondak 2015) emerge in non-zero sum situations. Intergroup-relations among stigmatized groups, therefore, have the possibility to be either fraught or congenial. Understanding what a group member stands to lose in a given situation helps explain variation in outlooks and behaviors.

Nevertheless, being a member of a stigmatized group may not counteract the effects of being part of a racially or gender advantaged group. After all, people adopt a feminist identity, whereas race and ethnicity and gender are ascribed characteristics. This raises the possibility that – underneath whatever broader ideology that may shape both gender and racial attitudes – feminists are focused specifically on the plight of women and are uninterested in exploring how the same systems of oppression affect other groups in society. Indeed, Banks et al. (2014) find evidence that only *inclusive feminism* – believing that issues associated with race are equally important to sexism – is associated with racial attitudes. The authors find that other attitudes associated with feminist identification are not related to a heightened awareness about racial inequalities. Importantly, Banks et al. (2014) measure feminism using attitudes and beliefs, not self-identification. This difference is important given an extensive literature showing that many people hold beliefs associated with feminism but do not adopt the label (Zucker 2004; Zucker and Bay-Cheng 2010). Our study builds on this work by exploring whether identifying as a feminist, a stigmatized group, helps build bridges between these groups.

Why we study feminist identification not women

This paper focuses on feminists, and not women, as a potentially powerful allied group in the fight for racial equality. We do so because research has repeatedly demonstrated that women do not represent a cohesive social or political group, including in the fight for racial equality. Attitudinal heterogeneity exists among women, even on matters that relate directly to women (Conover 1988; Plutzer 1988; Rhodebeck 1996) including the Equal Rights Amendment (Mansbridge 1985) abortion laws (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992), the #metoo movement (Hoff 2020), and even hostile sexism attitudes and perceptions of gender discrimination (Bracic, Israel-Trummel, and Shortle 2019; Cassese and Barnes 2019).

Moreover, previous work also highlights that white women are less likely than women of color to acknowledge discrimination against people of color (Hooks 1984). Cassese and Barnes (2019) argue that white women frequently distance themselves from women of color and behave similarly to white men in order to maintain their racial privilege (also see Frasure-Yokley 2018). Strolovitch, Wong, and Proctor (2017) similarly argue that white women chose their “possessive investment in whiteness” over women’s issues and feminist voices when casting their vote for Donald Trump. White women, therefore, do not appear to be a group well-suited to be advocates and allies for people of color. Instead, our study explores how another identity white women might adopt, feminist, may influence their willingness to acknowledge both gender and racial oppression.

Feminist identification is also a useful construct because it allows scholars to isolate the distinctive political values of those committed to gender equality irrespective of their gender. While the earliest work on feminist identification explores how women's family life, work responsibilities, and experiences with discrimination inform their support of feminism (Gurin and Townsend 1986; Plutzer 1988, 1991), subsequent work challenged the conflation of female gender identity and feminist identification (Henderson-king and Stewart 1994; Rhodebeck 1996; Simien and Clawson 2004). Different from earlier work, research in the latter tradition compares feminist self-identification and gender role attitudes across women and men (Cook and Wilcox 1991; Davis and Robinson 1991; Cowan, Mestlin, and Masek 1992; Cassidy and Warren 1996; Rhodebeck 1996; Schnittker, Freese, and Powell 2003; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; McCabe 2005). This work also finds that for both women and men, political ideology is a robust predictor of feminist identification (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; McCabe 2005). Furthermore, this work suggests that feminists, irrespective of gender, exhibit distinct political values from that of non-feminists (Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Liss et al. 2001).⁴ In other words, while the earliest work in this area presumed that women are likely predisposed to adopting a feminist identity because of their life experiences, subsequent work demonstrated that men, too, can make this leap – and when they do, male feminists express political values and attitudes that are markedly similar to their female counterparts (Smith 1985). Given these findings, in our study, we examine feminist identification among both white men and women and ask whether a relationship exists between identifying in feminist terms and the ability to perceive (and react to) discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities in the United States.

Building on these findings, we test the *Feminist Racial Consciousness Raising Hypothesis*, which states:

- White respondents who identify as strong feminists will be more likely than their non- and weak feminist counterparts to perceive a higher relative rate of discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities.

The relationship between feminist identification, contextual factors, and perceptions of discrimination

Additionally, the *clarity of cues* regarding the presence of discrimination also likely moderates individual differences in attitudes (Snyder and Ickes 1985). For instance, Major, Quinton, and Schmader (2003) find that women who strongly and weakly identify with their gender are equally likely to perceive gender-based discrimination in situations where there is both an absence of cues and when there is a strong and unambiguous cue about gender discrimination. That said, in cases when the cue is ambiguous – where there *may* be evidence of gender-based discrimination – strong identifiers were far more likely to perceive discrimination than their more weakly identifying counterparts.

Taken together, the existing literature provides clear grounds for the expectation that strong feminist identifiers will be more likely to perceive discrimination than their weak and non-feminist counterparts. However, it also suggests that situational factors may

shift this gap. In particular, work in this area suggests that unambiguous cues regarding discrimination may lead non-, weak, and strong feminist identifiers to similarly perceive discrimination. Drawing on this work, we test the *Racially Unambiguous Attributions Hypothesis*, which states:

- There will be no difference in strong, weak, and non-feminists likelihood of perceiving a higher relative rate of discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities when a clear cue of racial bias is present.

Given this work, we should also expect that non-, weak, and strong feminist identifiers will perceive discrimination differently in situations where cues regarding the role of racial bias are more ambiguous. In these cases, strong feminists may be more likely to “make the cognitive leap” and perceive racial injustice (Major, Quinton, and Schmader 2003, 221). We formalize this expectation in the *Racially Ambiguous Attributions Hypothesis*:

- Strong identifying feminists will be more likely than weak and non-feminists to perceive a higher relative rate of discrimination toward racial and ethnic minorities when an ambiguous cue of racial discrimination is present.

Research design

To assess the relationship between feminist identification and perceptions of racial discrimination, we draw on both observational and experimental data. First, we use the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES) to observe whether feminist identification among white Americans is correlated with generalized perceptions of discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities. Second, we collected original data in July 2018 with the twin aims of understanding how feminist identification corresponds to white Americans’ reactions to specific situations involving race and testing whether these reactions are context-dependent. More specifically, we test whether the relationship between feminist identification and perceiving discrimination appears in a controlled setting and whether this relationship depends, in part, on the explicitness or ambiguity of the racial cue in a given situation. Together, the two data sources provide a sense of the associational relationship between feminist identification and when we may see this relationship emerge. Importantly, while the existing literature suggests that the relationship between feminist identification and political attitudes is similar for men and women as discussed above, we also analyze the data separately by gender to test differences in the magnitude of these relationships across these groups.

Cross-sectional analyses

We first turn to the 2016 ANES, which we use to assess whether feminist identity is correlated with attitudes toward other stigmatized groups in society among non-Hispanic white Americans. Drawing on existing social psychology and political science studies that note the importance of social attachment to a group, our independent variable

measures feminist identification. The measure relies on four questions that tap into the social elements of being a feminist, including whether respondents feel warm or cool toward feminists and whether they self-identify as a feminist.⁵

The analyses that follow use a feminist identity measure that first combines the questions using a factor analysis and then transforms the feminist identity measure into quartiles.⁶ Analyses that treat feminist identity as a continuous variable produce similar results.⁷

Our main dependent variables rely on measures of perceived discrimination toward racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. The ANES asks whether African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, or non-Hispanic white Americans face a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or no discrimination in the United States. These variables range between 0 (none at all) to 4 (a great deal). In particular, we are interested in whether white feminists perceive other racial and ethnic groups as facing more discrimination relative to white people in the United States. As such, we create three relative measures of perceived discrimination by subtracting the perceived amount of discrimination each minority group faces from the perceived amount of discrimination white people face. And by way of a comparison, we create a similar relative discrimination measure that compares perceived rates of discrimination for women versus men using the same coding strategy. We use perceptions of discrimination as the main dependent variable for two reasons. First, these questions allow us to run comparable analyses with perceptions of discrimination against African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. Second, these measures more closely map onto the dependent variable in the experiment to come. Table B16 in the Online Appendix presents the results using the traditional racial resentment battery (or the Structural versus Individual Attributions for Black Americans' Economic and Social Status scale (SIA) (Kam and Burge 2018)) as the dependent variable.⁸

The resultant *relative* measure of perceived discrimination ranges between -4 and 4 . Here, a score of -4 indicates that the respondent reports that white Americans face “a great deal” of discrimination and the racial minority group in question faces “none at all.” A score of 4 indicates the reverse and a score of 0 indicates that the respondent reports that both groups experience the same amount of discrimination.⁹

The models include a host of control variables that aim to rule out characteristics and beliefs that correspond both with feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination. *Demographic* control variables include: gender, marital status, employment status, income, education, age, age-squared, region of residence, church attendance, evangelical self-identification, and survey mode. *Personality* traits include: the five personality traits captured using the TIPI scale, a measure capturing child-rearing practices that are sometimes considered a measure of authoritarian tendencies (MacWilliams 2016) or holding a rigid worldview (Hetherington and Weiler 2018), and a four-item scale that captures respondents' tendencies to hold strong opinions and take firm positions. *Gender attitudes* include questions both about feminist beliefs as well as egalitarianism. First, we include a series of questions that tap more generally into feminist ideology, including questions about how much attention the media should pay to discrimination against women, whether it is important that more women be elected to political office, and questions that tap into gender resentment.¹⁰ Including these variables in the model helps us isolate whether identifying as a feminist and with the feminist movement is correlated

with perceptions of discrimination that is separate from holding beliefs frequently associated with feminism. Additionally, we include a four-item scale to capture general views about equality and egalitarianism.¹¹ These measures help us rule out the possibility that an underlying sentiment about equality and fairness is correlated both with feminist identification and perceiving racial and ethnic discrimination. *Group feelings* include feeling thermometer measures toward African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and white Americans.¹² *Political outlooks* include seven-point measures of party identification, ideology, attitudes about the government's role, and political interest.¹³

Correlational results

The top panel of [Figure 1](#) shows the relationship between feminist identity and relative perceived discrimination graphically among white respondents. The *x*-axis displays the four quartiles of feminist identification, with higher quartiles representing a stronger feminist identity. The *y*-axis shows perceived discrimination of a racial or ethnic group versus white Americans, with higher numbers indicating that the racial or ethnic minority group experiences more discrimination relative to white people in the United States. The point estimates are predicted values of perceived discrimination for each feminist quartile in models that include all the control variables described above. Tables B2 – B4 in the Online Appendix present detailed results from the regression models, with and without different control variables.

The correlational analyses yield three important takeaway points. First, perceived discrimination varies based on the racial or ethnic group in question. Regardless of feminist identity, white Americans perceive that African Americans experience the most discrimination, followed by Hispanic, and then Asian Americans. These results corroborate existing research demonstrating that white Americans view the experiences of minority groups in the United States differently from themselves and other groups (Barnes et al. 2004; Dailey et al. 2010; Banfield and Dovidio 2013).

The second important takeaway from these analyses is that there is a positive correlation between feminist identity and perceptions of relative discrimination. For each measure, perceptions of discrimination increase alongside feminist identity, with gaps ranging from just over 0.30 and just below 0.45 between those in the top and bottom quartiles.¹⁴

One problem with survey research is that it is difficult to interpret the size of a relationship. Is a gap of one-half a point a lot or a little? To put these results in context, we compare these findings to a dependent variable that measures relative discrimination for women versus men. Just as with the aforementioned dependent variables, positive numbers indicate the respondents believe women face more discrimination than men, negative numbers indicate the reverse, and values of zero indicate that respondents do not perceive any difference in the discrimination faced by the two groups. It turns out that the perceived discrimination gap between the strongest and weakest feminists found for racial and ethnic minorities is actually *larger* than the gap that compares perceived discrimination for women versus men (0.23, *p*-value = 0.06).¹⁵ While we should not be surprised that strong, self-identified feminists perceive discrimination toward women at higher rates than non-feminists or anti-feminists, the slightly larger gaps

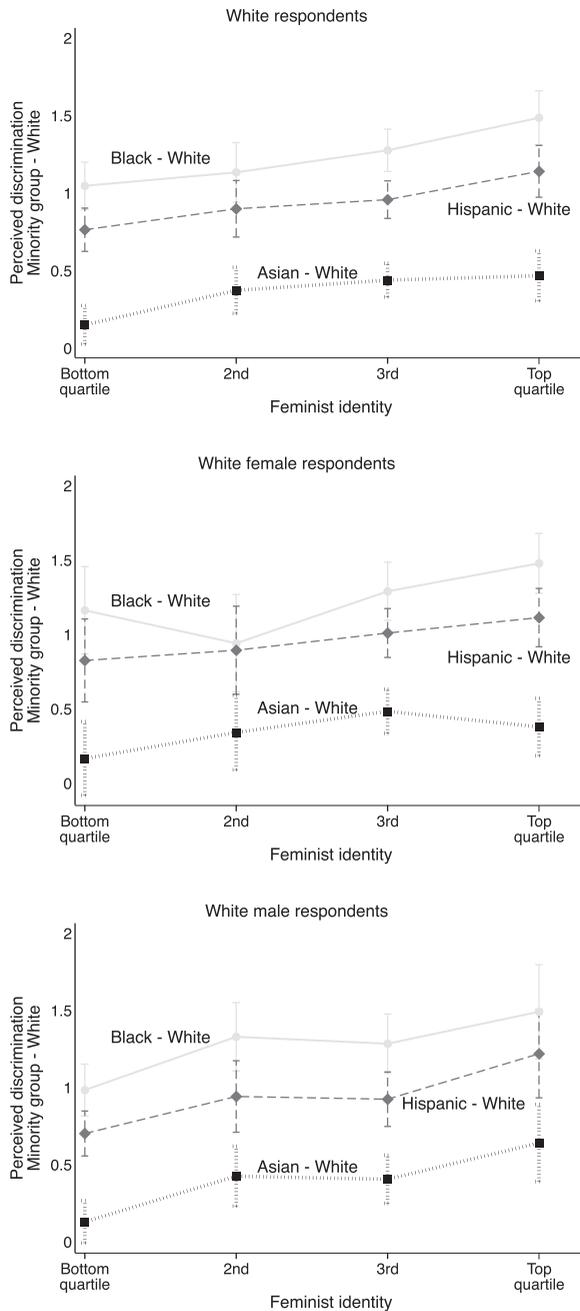


Figure 1. Feminist identity is correlated with perceived discrimination against African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. The dependent variable is a relative measure of perceived discrimination that ranges from -4 (white people experience a great deal of discrimination and minority group experiences no discrimination) to 4 (minority group experiences a great deal of discrimination and white people experience no discrimination). Feminist identity is a measure of social identification as a feminist, with respondents falling into one of four quartiles. Higher quartiles correspond with a stronger feminist identity. Points represent the predicted dependent variable at each level of feminist identity conditional on control variables described in the text. Vertical bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

found for questions asking about racial and ethnic minorities demonstrate that these differences are substantively meaningful.¹⁶ Moreover, we see that the magnitude of the feminist results is substantively meaningful when we compare the effect sizes to those of other variables. For example, the perception gap in discrimination is actually *larger* between strong and weak feminists compared to the gap that appears between Republicans and Democrats.¹⁷

The third takeaway from the correlational analyses is that the relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination remain substantively large and statistically significant even in models that include a host of variables that are correlated both with identifying as a feminist and perceiving discrimination. Across the three main dependent variables (see Tables B2–B4), the relationship shrinks once the model includes measures of gender attitudes, general affect toward different racial and ethnic groups, and political outlooks.¹⁸ And yet, feminist identification remains an important correlate of respondents' perceptions of discrimination. Importantly, the fully specified model may understate the main results. If feminist self-identification comes before identifying as a Democrat (Huddy and Willmann 2017), for example, including partisanship as a control variable would bias our estimates downward. We chose to include a large set of control variables, some of which may be a consequence of holding a feminist identity rather than a cause, in order to see whether there is an association between holding a feminist identity – calling oneself a feminist and identifying with other feminists – and perceptions of discrimination even after taking into account various political and social explanations of perceived discrimination. In doing so, the results presented in Figure 1 are conservative estimates, and the statistically significant and substantively meaningful relationship we find appears despite, not because of, our variable selection.¹⁹

The relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination are similar for both men and women. The middle (bottom) panel of Figure 1 presents the results for white female (male) respondents separately. Visually, similar patterns emerge for both men and women across the three dependent variables: respondents who identify more strongly with the feminist label are more likely to perceive greater levels of discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities relative to white Americans. Tables B7–B9 present the empirical models separately for men and women. A pattern that appears in these tables is that the relationship between feminist identification and perceptions of discrimination seems stronger for men relative to women. These results challenge the widespread assumption in the earliest scholarship on feminist identification that women's life experiences uniquely position them to identify as feminists and express political attitudes consistent with this group. While further analyses show that the relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination is statistically the same for men and women (see Tables B10–B12), these results demonstrate that feminist men represent an important potential ally in the fight for racial equality.

The correlational results provide support for the *Feminist Racial Consciousness Raising Hypothesis*. The data reveal a distinct pattern in which feminist social identity and perceiving discrimination against racial and ethnic minority groups go hand in hand. But these analyses leave a few questions unanswered. First, we do not know about what sorts of discrimination respondents are thinking when answering these questions. Feminists and non-feminists may be thinking about different types of discrimination when answering about the various groups, leading to the results. More, it is unclear if feminists

and non-feminists would respond similarly in the same context. Second, an omitted variable not captured by any of the controls may be encouraging people to identify as feminists and be more likely to report the existence of generalized discrimination. And third, perceiving more discrimination in society may push individuals to take on the feminist label. The next section builds on the ANES correlational findings and presents additional analyses that test how individuals respond when the role of racial bias is ambiguous versus stated explicitly.

Experimental design

The purpose of the second study is to further test whether holding a feminist identity corresponds with perceiving discrimination. To do so, we recruited 2,995 respondents through Lucid's Academia in July of 2018.²⁰ The analyses that follow focus on the 2,010 white subsample of respondents.

Participants first answered a series of questions to measure feminist identification. These questions measure both social identification as a feminist (Huddy, Mason, and Aaroe 2015) as well as beliefs commonly associated with feminist ideology.²¹ After answering these questions, respondents answered a series of demographic questions. Before transitioning to the experimental portion of the survey, participants completed a distractor task that was ostensibly meant to measure their perceptual skill. Respondents counted and reported the number of dots on three images.

All respondents then read a newspaper article about an organization who wanted to hold a rally protesting recent police-involved shootings of unarmed Black men and women but were unable to secure a rally permit from the City of Dallas. The articles were identical except for how they discussed race.²² In one condition, which we call the racially ambiguous condition, respondents read about a fictitious organization called RallyTrack that

“has been tracking the permit application process across several states over the last year. They found that 90% of permit requests made by similar groups wanting to protest police-involved shootings have been approved, which is somewhat lower than the 97% approval rate for all groups.”

Respondents in the racially ambiguous condition also read about a scandal “involving officials who are responsible for granting permits” in which “Several emails between officials in the police department suggest that some groups paid to expedite their permit application became public last month.” In this version of the article, the role of race in the city's decision to deny a permit is unclear.

Respondents who read the racially explicit version of the news article read that RallyTrack found that “10% of permit requests made by similar groups wanting to protest police-involved shootings have been rejected, which is three times higher than the 3% rejection rate for all groups.” While the statistics in the two studies are the same, the ratio-difference principle differs (Quattrone and Tversky 1988) meaning that people are likely to interpret the 3% to 10% change as larger than the 90% to 97% change. A second difference between the racially explicit and ambiguous conditions is the nature of the scandal. In the racially explicit condition, the news article noted that “Several racially charged emails between officials in the police department became public last

month.” While both scandals raise “questions about whether permit decisions are impartial,” one scandal explicitly deals with race while the other does not. While racial discrimination could have played a role in city officials’ decision to deny protesters a permit in both conditions, the main goal of the treatment is to vary the scale of the problem as well as the explicit recognition of the role of race. Notably, there are two differences between the treatment conditions. Both the numerical framing and the nature of the scandal vary across the conditions. We made this decision in order to offer a clear set of cues to respondents while maintaining as much similarity as possible across the two scenarios.²³ This decision, however, means we do not know what aspect of the cues – numerical framing, scandal, or both – resonate with respondents.²⁴ Instead, the study shows how individuals generally respond to ambiguous and explicit cues rather than the power of a specific cue²⁵

After reading the newspaper article, respondents reacted to what they read. They indicated their level of agreement with six statements, two of which represent our attitudinal dependent variables.²⁶ One statement read: “City officials did not racially discriminate against the demonstration organizers.” The other statement read: “Race likely played a role in the city officials’ decision to deny the protestors a permit.” Respondents could agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statements. We recoded and averaged the two questions together such that a single variable that measured perceived discrimination ranges between 0 and 3, with higher numbers corresponding to more perceived discrimination.²⁷ Finally, we asked three manipulation check questions to measure whether respondents read the news article carefully.²⁸

Testing the relationship between feminist identification and perceived discrimination in a controlled setting

We begin by testing whether there is a correlation between feminist identification and responding to a specific situation. As a reminder, we do not know what individuals think about when answering a generalized question about discrimination and how reports of generalized perceptions of discrimination map onto responses to a specific instance involving race. Utilizing the data to see how feminist identification is associated with reactions to a specific situation involving race addresses some of the lingering concerns from the ANES results.

The top portion of [Table 1](#) presents the relationship between feminist identity – broken down into quartiles – and perceptions of racial discrimination among white respondents in the racially ambiguous condition.²⁹ Column 1 presents the results with no control variables, meaning that the intercept (1.23) corresponds to the average measure of perceived discrimination among those in the bottom quartile of feminist identity. The positive coefficients indicate that as people more strongly identify as feminist, they are also more likely to perceive racial discrimination in a situation in which the racial motivations underpinning city officials’ behaviors are ambiguous. This relationship holds in columns 2–4 which incorporate demographic measures, beliefs associated with feminism, and political outlooks. Even after controlling for attitudes about feminism as well as political ideology and party identification, adopting a feminist identity is correlated with perceiving racial discrimination. These results lend credibility to the *Racially Ambiguous Attributions Hypothesis*, which suggested that, relative to weaker feminists,

Table 1. Perceptions of racial discrimination.

	Racially ambiguous condition			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Feminist identity quartiles				
2nd quartile	0.11 (0.07)	0.14* (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)
3rd quartile	0.29** (0.07)	0.33** (0.07)	0.18** (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)
4th quartile	0.65** (0.07)	0.68** (0.07)	0.44** (0.07)	0.32** (0.07)
Intercept	1.23** (0.05)	1.32** (0.21)	2.10** (0.21)	2.30** (0.20)
Demographic controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Feminist ideology	No	No	Yes	Yes
PID and ideo	No	No	No	Yes
R ²	0.106	0.159	0.245	0.278
Observations	930	930	930	930
	Racially explicit condition			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Feminist identity quartiles				
2nd quartile	0.22** (0.07)	0.21** (0.07)	0.08 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)
3rd quartile	0.44** (0.07)	0.40** (0.07)	0.18** (0.07)	0.12* (0.07)
4th quartile	0.78** (0.07)	0.73** (0.07)	0.37** (0.07)	0.26** (0.08)
Intercept	1.24** (0.05)	2.08** (0.19)	2.74** (0.19)	2.99** (0.19)
demographic controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
feminist ideology	No	No	Yes	Yes
PID and ideo	No	No	No	Yes
R ²	0.134	0.198	0.319	0.345
Observations	906	906	906	906

Notes: The dependent variable is a measure of perceived discrimination that ranges from 0 (race was not a factor in the city's decision when denying the protestors a permit) and 3 (race was definitely a factor in the city's decision when denying the protestors a permit). The coefficients are OLS estimates. Feminist identity is a measure of social identification as a feminist, with respondents falling into one of four quartiles. The bottom quartile (low feminist identity) serve as the reference category. The top (bottom) panel consists of respondents in the *racially ambiguous* (*racially explicit*) condition. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. "Demographics" include: gender, marital status, education, parental status, church attendance, income, region of residence, age, and age-squared. "Feminist ideology" is a scaled measure that captures attitudes about women that is separate from identification as a feminist. "PID and Ideo" include respondents' party identification and political ideology. * = $p < .1$ ** = $p < .05$.

stronger feminists should be more likely to perceive discrimination when cues are ambiguous. Strong feminists, weak feminists, and non-feminists interpreted the same ambiguous information differently, with stronger feminists being more likely to perceive the City's actions as racially based and discriminatory.

The bottom panel of Table 1 presents the same analyses among respondents in the racially explicit condition. Here, the *Racially Unambiguous Attributions Hypothesis* expected that strength of feminist identification should not play a role – or should play a lesser role – in situations in which the racial cue is explicit and unambiguous. The idea here is that strong identities allow individuals to “make the leap” to see discrimination more easily, which lends itself to perceiving discrimination when the presence or absence of bias is unclear. But in cases when there is clear discrimination or bias, the literature has previously shown that identity strength plays a lesser role. We do not find evidence in support of this hypothesis. On the contrary, the results from

the explicit condition – presented in the bottom portion of Table 1 – look markedly similar to the results for respondents in the ambiguous condition. Once again, stronger feminists are more likely to perceive discrimination compared to weaker and non-feminists, and this gap remains even when controlling for demographic characteristics, feminist beliefs, and political outlooks. Rather than an explicit cue curbing or even eradicating the relationship between identity strength and perceiving discrimination, the relationship remains in the face of a clear cue. And, finally, we once again do not find evidence of gender differences in the main results (Tables D3 and D4). In both the explicit and ambiguous scenarios, the relationship between feminist identification and perceiving discrimination is similar for men and women.

Experimental results: context matters, but only for feminists

Next, we test how respondents reacted to the different scenarios presented in the newspaper articles. Among the full subsample of white respondents, the average perception of racial discrimination was 0.09 points higher among respondents in the racially explicit condition compared to respondents in the racially ambiguous condition ($se = 0.04$; p -value $< .05$).³⁰

This treatment effect, however, differs across respondents' pre-existing feminist identities. Figure 2 presents the experimental treatment effects among respondents in each feminist quartile.³¹ The point estimates represent the difference in perceived discrimination – again on a 0–3 scale – between respondents in the racially explicit condition and those in the racially ambiguous condition. The bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Here we see big differences in the treatment effect across feminist identities. The treatment effect among respondents in the bottom feminist quartile is 0.015

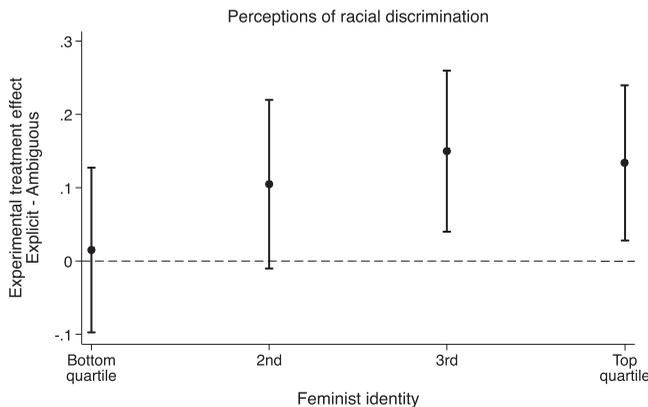


Figure 2. Feminist identity is correlated with perceptions of discrimination. The y-axis represents the difference in perceived discrimination between those in the *racially explicit* experimental condition and those in the *racially ambiguous* experimental condition. The four points represent the experimental treatment effects among respondents within each of the feminist quartiles, which are noted along the x-axis. Higher quartiles correspond with a stronger feminist identity. Vertical bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

($se = 0.07$; p -value = .83) while the treatment effect among respondents in the top feminist quartile is 0.14 ($se = 0.06$; p -value < .05).³² Not only are strong feminists more likely to perceive racial discrimination than weak feminists in both the ambiguous and explicit conditions, but the framing in the newspaper article actually *increases* the size of this gap.³³ Strong feminists perceive more racism in the racially explicit condition than similarly strong feminists in the racially ambiguous condition, whereas weak feminists do not respond to the experimental treatment at all.³⁴ Here, we find that while the treatment effect is substantively small and statistically insignificant among weak feminists, there are moderate differences among respondents in the second feminist quartile (difference = 0.105; p -value = .14). Respondents in the third feminist quartile, however, respond similarly to the differences in framing (0.15; p -value < .05).³⁵

Table D5 in the Online Appendix presents models that test whether the experimental treatment affected respondents in the various quartiles differently. The interaction models are statistically suggestive but not statistically significant. Taken with the results in Figure 2, it means that while there is no (strong) evidence of treatment effects among weak (strong) feminists, we cannot definitively say that strong and weak feminists responded differently to the treatment.³⁶ Importantly, however, the data show no evidence of the perception gap shrinking across the explicit and ambiguous conditions. Instead, the data suggest that the perception gap *widens*. Non-feminists, when confronted with explicit cues about racial discrimination, lag even further behind their feminist counterparts.

Taken together, these findings offer suggestive evidence that strong feminists are not only more likely to perceive discrimination in an ambiguous setting, they are also more likely to update their attitudes when exposed to a scenario in which racial bias appears to be a more explicit motivating factor.

Discussion

Feminism, construed narrowly, focuses on equality and egalitarianism among men and women. Feminism, construed more broadly, focuses on equality and egalitarianism among all groups. The purpose of the current study was to explore whether there is a relationship between identifying in feminist terms (or not) and recognizing and acting on racial and ethnic discrimination. Bringing together disparate research from political science, psychology, and gender studies, we find that for white Americans, identifying strongly with a subgroup identity that is stigmatized can, in some cases, help members of an otherwise racially advantaged group better perceive and respond to the plight of racial and ethnic minorities.

Indeed, the ANES cross-sectional analyses show that feminist identification is associated with perceiving discrimination against African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. This relationship remains even when the models take attitudes about race, gender, and politics into account. Believing that women face discrimination or identifying as a liberal, for example, does not fully explain why some people are more likely to perceive racial and ethnic discrimination than others. We find that white Americans who strongly identify as feminists are more likely to perceive discrimination in society.

Our second study, which controlled respondents' exposure to information about the role of racial bias in a fictional scenario that mirrors real world political dynamics, builds on the ANES findings in two important ways. First, correlational results demonstrate that white Americans with varying degrees of feminist identification react differently to specific racially charged scenarios. Strong feminists are more likely to perceive discrimination than weak or non-feminists in both the *racially ambiguous* and *racially explicit* scenarios. It is therefore not simply the case that feminists and non-feminists conjure up different images of generalized discrimination; their interpretations of the same events differ.

Second, the study reveals that the perception gap in racial discrimination between feminists and non-feminists is actually *larger* in the *racially explicit* condition relative to the *racially ambiguous* condition. Strong feminists are not only more likely to perceive discrimination in the *racially ambiguous* and *racially explicit* conditions, the strength of this relationship increases in the latter condition. Previous research suggested that feminists and non-feminists might behave similarly when racial bias is unequivocal. This is not what we found in our study. Rather, the gap between feminists and non-feminists actually *widens* when the role of racial bias is made clearer.

Together, these results have important theoretical and normative implications. First, our results speak to a growing literature about feminist identity and the consequences of identifying as a feminist. While being a feminist is commonly associated with holding beliefs associated with gender equality, we find that the *social* element of feminism, that is, calling oneself a feminist and identifying with other feminists, is a distinct and important element of the feminism movement. Second, our paper broadens the feminist literature by exploring the potential for spillover effects in other arenas. We find that holding a feminist identity has consequences outside the gender sphere and shapes how people think about race as well.

Our results also engage broader theoretical critiques of feminism. At first blush, the correlational results in the *racially ambiguous* condition – in which strength of feminist identity is associated with perceptions of discrimination – could be interpreted as lending credibility to claims that feminists are “hypersensitive to discrimination even when it’s not there” (Denfeld 1995; Roy, Weibust, and Miller 2007). Adherents to this view might conclude that similar to seeing gender discrimination when it is not there, feminists inappropriately project racism onto benign social situations. Looking at the relationship between feminist identity and perceived discrimination in the *racially explicit* condition, however, calls this interpretation into question. Strong feminists are also the ones who sound the alarm of racism after reading a newspaper article in which the racial motivations are much more explicit. Implicit in the claim that feminists are overly sensitive to discrimination is the counterclaim that non-feminists identify *real* discrimination when they see it. But the perception gap remains – and even grows somewhat – when the likelihood of there being racial discrimination is greater.

These findings also have important normative implications for a well-functioning democracy and society. Addressing inequities in society requires individuals to be aware of inequality and willing to acknowledge these dynamics in social situations. Our study suggests that high identifying feminists, by virtue of their shared awareness of structural discrimination against women and willingness to acknowledge racial bias,

are a promising group to forge broad and diverse coalitions aimed at actively addressing discrimination and inequities in society.

Far from closing the door on this research question, our findings open the door to additional avenues of research. First, our results do not speak to the basis of white Americans' choice to adopt a feminist identity in the first place. For example, strong feminists are relatively more likely to perceive discrimination than non-feminists, but there is still a great deal variation in perceptions of discrimination among strong feminists. Differences in racial attitudes among feminists might arise because some are feminists to advance the agenda of women whereas some are feminists because they are concerned about social equality, broadly defined. Understanding the political and social drivers of feminist identification will offer important context to our findings. Second, our results further contribute to calls for researchers to explore how different identities intersect and correlate with attitudes in related, but distinct, contexts. Most of the work on feminism and public opinion investigates attitudes toward policy issues that predominantly affect women and perceptions of discrimination against women. But our paper shows that much can be gained when researchers consider gender and racial attitudes together. Finally, our study invites future work that explores the relationship between feminist identification and rallying together to bring forth change. Recognizing discrimination represents an important first step; taking action to support people of color and relinquish disproportionate power held by white Americans represents the next important step.

Notes

1. Similar critiques have been waged against the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) movement with respect to race and class, Black civil rights organizations centering the concerns of heterosexual Black men and women (Cohen 1999), and the anti-racism movement for privileging the interests of African Americans over other racial and ethnic minorities (Alcoff 2003).
2. In this paper, we use the term white to refer to non-Hispanic white respondents who reside in the United States. We also sometimes refer to respondents as male and female but understand that sex assigned at birth and gender identity and expression can be different.
3. Data from 2008 show that Clinton's primary support came from gender conservatives because these people were also racial conservatives (Sears and Tesler 2010). This differs from the research focusing on feminist identity, although it suggests an association between an identity associated with gender and attitudes about race.
4. Simien and Clawson (2004) make a similar argument when justifying their decision to look at both Black men and women in their study of Black feminist consciousness: "...black feminism stems from the *recognition* that black women are discriminated against on the basis of their race and gender, not from particularly biological characteristics" (796).
5. Questions include: 1. "How would you rate feminists?" 2. "Do you consider yourself a strong feminist, a feminist, or are you not a feminist?" 3. "How well does the term 'feminist' describe you?" 4. "How well does the term 'anti-feminist' describe you?"
6. The factor analysis shows that all 4 questions load onto a single dimension. First eigenvalue = 1.96. Second eigenvalue = 0.21.
7. We opted for a binned approach in order to include binary indicators in the regression model. Doing so has the benefit of removing linearity assumptions from the model. This decision does, however, mean that we pool together respondents who do not have identical feminist identity scores. Importantly, the results do not rely on our decision to use quartiles.

In addition to the continuous measure producing similar results, breaking the data into quintiles and deciles produce the same patterns.

8. Perceptions of discrimination against African Americans and SIA are strongly correlated and the substantive and statistical results are virtually the same using the two different measures.
9. Online Appendix B shows the distributions of the four dependent variables.
10. Exact question wording is available in the Online Appendix. Importantly, these questions that tap into feminist ideology focus exclusively on beliefs associated with gender. This differs from research looking at Black feminist consciousness (such as Simien and Clawson 2004) which relies on gender equality questions in which race is also embedded into the question. While the feminist ideology questions we use in this study draw on beliefs and ideas from the liberal feminist tradition, the white subjects likely perceive feminism through this lens.
11. The four agree-disagree statements are: Society should make sure everyone has equal opportunity; We'd be better off if worried less about equality; It is not a big problem if some have more chance in life; If people were treated more fairly there would be fewer problems.
12. Affect toward African Americans, alongside perceptions of discrimination, represents one of the underpinning attitudes that together produce racial resentment (Kam and Burge 2018; Kinder and Sanders 1996). While affect and perceptions of discrimination are empirically correlated, previous research shows that the two measures are distinct theoretical constructs (Kam and Burge 2018). As such, we include generalized feelings toward racial and ethnic minority groups in society as control variables.
13. Two statements make up the economic liberalism measure. The first asks respondents to decide whether the government should ensure a good standard of living or let people get ahead on their own, and the second asks whether the government should provide more services (which includes more spending) or fewer services (and spend less). We combined the two questions so that higher numbers indicate more conservative attitudes. The economic individualism measures help account for the possibility that reported attitudes about discrimination may actually be a function of individualistic principles rather than racial animus (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Additionally, attitudes about individualism serve as another component piece of broader racial resentment alongside group affect and perceived discrimination (Kam and Burge 2018). By controlling for both group affect and individualistic attitudes, we account for alternative explanations commonly given when discussing broader explanations of racial attitudes. Political interest is an averaged measure of self-reported interest in politics and frequency with which respondents follow politics in the media.
14. Coefficients comparing those in the 4th quartile and 1st quartile are 0.44 (black versus white), 0.38 (Hispanic versus white), 0.32 (Asian versus white). All three coefficients have p-values of less than 0.01. Interestingly, while intercepts differ across the groups (particularly discrimination against Asian Americans, the slopes are relatively similar to one another. In other words, people might perceive baseline differences in discrimination across groups, but the relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination are less stark.
15. Interestingly, the relationship across the four quartiles displays less of a linear increase than the models with the other dependent variables. See Table B5 for the full set of results.
16. Some might find it surprising that the relationship between feminist identification and perceptions of gender discrimination is actually smaller than it is for racial and ethnic groups. Feminism is, after all, focused on equality of the gender. Importantly, the relationship between feminist identification and relative perceptions of discrimination is the same size for men versus women as the different racial and ethnic comparisons in models that do not include control variables and in models that control for demographics and personality traits. The size of the relationship shrinks once we include party identification and ideology in the model, which may indicate that feminist identification and gender attitudes are more closely related to political outlooks than feminist identification and racial attitudes are.

Additionally, a person's motivation to be feminist may affect the relationships across the different groups. For example, feminists can believe that women have made great advancements in society and that discrimination is not nearly as bad as it was in the past. Believing that there is less discrimination against women than other groups in society does not inherently mean that feminists do not adhere to the goals of equality and are not prepared to call out discrimination when they see it. Sears and Tesler (2010) discuss a similar result whereby white female Clinton voters reported, after it was clear that Barack Obama would win the Democratic nomination over Hillary Clinton, that racism is a much more serious problem than sexism.

17. The partisan difference in perceptions of discrimination ranges from -0.12 to -0.28 , with Republicans reporting a smaller gap in discrimination between a particular racial or ethnic group and white Americans compared to Democrats.
18. The correlations in all three models become noticeably smaller once the variables measuring gender attitudes are in the model, and this dip largely appears to be the result of the inclusion of one question that asks how much attention the media should pay to discrimination against women. Re-creating a feminist belief measure that relies on the gender resentment questions and a question about women being elected to office and re-running the analyses yield a stronger relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of discrimination even when feminist beliefs appear in the model. This is likely due to the fact that the feminist question asks about discrimination toward women directly, which is strongly correlated with perceived discrimination toward other groups. We present the results using the feminist belief measure that includes the discrimination question because the results demonstrate that a correlation between feminist social identity and perceptions of discrimination exists even when controlling for views about discrimination in a related context.
19. Feminist identification not only corresponds with perceptions of discrimination but racially laden policy attitudes. See Table B6 in the Online Appendix for results.
20. Lucid is an online marketplace where hundreds of different panel companies supply study samples. Lucid's partnering companies find respondents through various online communities, many of which are double opt-in panels. Lucid Academia provides a sample that reflects the American population with respect to age, gender, region of residence, race, ethnicity, and household home.
21. Question wordings are available in the Online Appendix.
22. The experimental stimuli are available in Online Appendix D.
23. If, for example, we simply added more information to the article with the explicit cues, the article would not only provide explicit cues but also more cues and more information.
24. While a limitation, understanding cue taking is not a main goal of the paper. We instead draw on existing research on cue taking in designing the study to develop realistic scenarios that provide different levels of clarity.
25. We further address the consequence of this design feature in the discussion section.
26. The purpose of the other four statements was to hide our interest in race in order to reduce demand effects. The Online Appendix lists the other four statements.
27. We also included a quasi-behavioral measure that asks whether the respondent would like to learn more about the rights of protestors in the United States. The exact question wording reads:

“The article you read earlier mentioned a protest advocacy group that tracks the rally permit application process. Would you like to learn more about the rights of protestors in the United States? If you mark ‘yes’ we will provide that information at the end of the survey.”

Respondents who marked “yes” were provided a link at the end of the survey with that information. We do not include the results for this dependent variable in the main text of the paper, as developing empirical expectations drew on literature not currently in the

manuscript. Interested readers should contact the authors. We will gladly share the theoretical underpinnings, associated hypotheses, and empirical results.

28. Manipulation check 1: Thinking back to the article you just read, what was the planned protest supposed to be about? [*Police-involved shootings*, Women's rights, Climate change, Teacher pay, Don't know] Manipulation check 2: In what city was the protest supposed to take place? [*Dallas*, Chicago, Nashville, Washington D.C., don't know] Manipulation check 3: What is the name of the organization that tracks permit applications? [*RallyTrack*, OneProtest, Rally America, Act Now, Don't know]. Response options (except for don't know) were randomized, correct answers are italicized.
29. Tables that present the coefficients and standard errors for all the control variables are available in the Online Appendix (Tables D1 and D2).
30. The average racial discrimination measure is 1.49 in the ambiguous condition and 1.58 in the treatment condition. When looking at the roughly 90% of respondents who answered at least one of the three manipulation check questions correctly the experimental treatment effect is 0.10 (se = 0.04; p -value < .05) and when looking at the roughly 75% of respondents who answered two or all three of the manipulation check questions correctly, the experimental treatment effect is 0.11 (se = 0.04; p -value < .05).
31. There is a minimum of 200 respondents per treatment condition within each quartile.
32. We do not believe these differences in treatment effects appear because respondents in the bottom feminist quartile read the newspaper article less carefully than respondents in the higher feminist quartiles. See Online Appendix D for a more detailed discussion.
33. To put the 0.14 estimate in context, the gap between the respondents in the top and bottom quartiles is 0.32 (0.26) in the racially ambiguous (explicit) condition. The effect of the experimental treatment on respondents in the top feminist quartile, therefore, is about half the size of the gap that exists between those at the top and bottom of the distribution.
34. Relating these findings back to Table 1, the perception gap between feminists in the top and bottom quartile is 0.65 in the racially ambiguous condition but is 0.78 in the racially explicit condition.
35. While the treatment effects look similar for respondents in the third and fourth feminist quartiles, respondents in the fourth quartile still perceive more discrimination in the racially explicit condition on account of the baseline differences in the ambiguous condition (difference = 0.36; p -value < .01).
36. It is likely that the interaction terms are not statistically significant due to insufficient power.

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ORCID

M. Brielle Harbin  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4393-8122>

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