

Dismantling Bias Conference Series

Understanding the Role of Allyship in Women's Postpartum Return to Work

Nitya Chawla

Texas A&M University, nchawla@mays.tamu.edu

Allison S. Gabriel

University of Arizona, asgabrie@arizona.edu

Melanie K. Prengler

Texas A&M University, mprengler@mays.tamu.edu

Kristie M. Rogers

Marquette University, kristie.rogers@marquette.edu

Benjamin A. Rogers

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Benjamin_Rogers@kenan-flagler.unc.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Nitya Chawla, Allison S. Gabriel, Melanie K. Prengler, Kristie M. Rogers, Benjamin A. Rogers, Alyssa Tedder-King, and Christopher C. Rosen

**Different Allies, Different Outcomes:
How Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement Values Affect Ally Engagement and
Effectiveness**

Dominant group members have different reasons for supporting marginalized groups as allies at work and in organizations (Radke, 2020). However, little is known about how these relate to allies' effectiveness. In this research, we examine how self-identified allies' motives relate to their effectiveness. Drawing on theoretical and qualitative work in critical studies (Edwards, 2006; Russell, 2011; see also Schultz, 2001), we use Schwartz' values theory (Schwartz, 1992) as an organizing framework. We focus on self-transcendence and self-enhancement values, which, as we describe below, likely are especially central to understanding allyship across different causes (Edwards, 2006). Ultimately, we suggest that, whereas both of these values can provide routes toward ally engagement, self-transcendence is likely associated with more effective advocacy.

Values are stable individual differences, and reflect a person's generalized goals that motivate action and organize meaning (Gouveia et al., 2015; Schwartz, 2006; Uzevovsky et al., 2016; Vecchione et al., 2016). Values theory has identified ten near-universal values, which further cluster into four cardinal categories: self-transcending, self-enhancing, conservation, and openness (Schwartz 1992, 1994). Values theory thus provides a helpful integrative lens, offering a well-validated, universally relevant means for assessing underlying motives, as well as behavior enacted to express and achieve those values. Crucially for this investigation, an individual's values have been found to be predictive of a range of behaviors, from voting to food consumption (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Sagiv, Roccas, Cieciuch, & Schwartz, 2017; Sverdik,

Roccas, & Sagiv, 2012). For instance, prosocial cooperation might be motivated either by respect for authority (conserving values) or by concern for others (self-transcending values).

We focus here on *self-transcendence* and *self-enhancement* values. Self-enhancing values include orientations towards personal status, achievement, and power, and self-transcending values include orientations towards universalism and benevolence (Schwartz 1992, 1994). Theoretically and empirically, these values are uncorrelated: one can have high or low self-enhancing values independently of having high or low self-transcendence values (Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). We use self-transcendence values to capture allies' orientation to address injustice in the entire system, and self-enhancement values to capture the orientation to demonstrate personal status.

First, we consider allies' *engagement* in activism, such as intentions to protest problematic policies and petition signing—beyond merely identifying minimally as allies. We suggest that both self-enhancement and self-transcendence should drive these behaviors. Activism behavior likely provides a sense of connection to others, focuses individuals beyond the self, and provides a means for achieving collective and justice goals. The more an ally values *self-transcendence*, the more they should seek these outcomes and thus engage in allyship. Simultaneously, engaging in activism can provide feelings of achievement, status, impact, and power (Drury et al., 2011; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Konrath et al., 2013), and even self-expansion (Besta et al., 2019; see also Schultz, 2001). The more allies value *self-enhancement*, the more they should seek these outcomes and thus engage in allyship. Thus, both self-enhancement and self-transcendence motives should positively relate to intended and actual activism behavior.

Second, we consider how *effective* allies are, specifically when they attempt to persuade others. Here, we expect the two values to diverge. Even if both self-enhancement and self-

transcendence values can motivate activism behavior, the style of this behavior may differ, leading to differences in effectiveness. Prior work has shown that Schwartz values predict how people use language, including verb tenses and pronouns (Chen, Hsieh, Mahmud, & Nichols, 2014). Thus, we used Language Inquiry and Word Count analysis (LIWC; Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007) to explore language differences based on ally values. Specifically, we would expect allies motivated by self-transcendence to focus their statements more on others or collective action, which should lead to more persuasiveness; and allies motivated by self-enhancement to focus their statements more on themselves, which should lead to *less* persuasiveness.

Across five studies ($N=5360$), we test how these values relate to allies' engagement and effectiveness. In Studies 1-2b, we sample self-identified allies of multiple communities (allies for LGBT colleagues, Black colleagues, female colleagues). We found that both self-enhancement and self-transcendence values predicted increased activism intentions, and self-transcendence predicted actual *behavior* (petition signing). In Studies 3-4, we showed participant advocacy statements from Studies 1-2a to a new sample of participants. We found that allies' self-transcending values were associated with higher persuasiveness, and allies' self-enhancing values were associated with lower persuasiveness. Our results suggest that, although both values can generate engagement, self-transcendence may promote more effective allyship at work.