



Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior

Monika L. McDermott

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What influences political behavior more -- one's gender or one's gendered personality traits?

Certain gendered traits have long been associated with particular political leanings in American politics. For example, the Democratic Party is thought to have a compassionate, feminine nature while the Republican Party is deemed to have a tougher, more masculine nature. *Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior*, a first-of-its-kind analysis of the effects of individuals' gendered personality traits -- masculinity and femininity -- on their political attitudes and behavior, argues that gendered personalities, and not biological sex, are what drive the political behavior of individual citizens. Drawing on a groundbreaking national survey measuring gendered personality traits and political preferences, the book shows that individuals' levels of masculine and feminine personality traits help to determine their party identification, vote choice, ideology, and political engagement. And in conjunction with biological sex, these traits also influence attitudes about sex roles. For example, the more strongly an individual identifies with "feminine" characteristics, the more strongly they identify with the Democratic Party. Likewise, the more "masculine" an individual, the more they are drawn to the GOP. The book also demonstrates that, despite conventional wisdom, biological sex does not dictate gendered personalities. As such, the personality trait approach of the book moves gender and politics research well beyond the traditional male/female dichotomy.

Moreover, *Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior* points to new and as yet underexplored strategies for candidate campaigns, get out the vote efforts, and officeholders' governing behavior.

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