

Attitudes Towards Women in Politics by Political Views and Gender

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Research Question

- Do people's beliefs on whether women are suited for politics vary by their political beliefs and gender?

Significance

- Women are underrepresented in politics. As of 2020, 126 women hold seats in the United States Congress, comprising 23.6% of its members (United States House of Representatives, 2020)
- It is imperative to study whether certain demographics hold gender stereotypes because it can be reflected when they are voting in an election (Dolan, 2014).

Background

- Women candidates tend to be seen as more compassionate while men are seen to be better suited emotionally for politics (Alexander & Andersen, 1993).
- Traditional gender role beliefs are related to less favorable view of women in politics (Alexander & Anderson, 1993).
- Americans with more conservative political views are more likely to hold traditional views of gender roles (Lye & Waldron, 1997).
- Conservative thinking is related to the need for order and certainty, and thus satisfaction with the status quo (Mendoza & Dimaria, 2019).

Hypothesis

- People with conservative beliefs are more likely to think that women are not suited for politics over people with liberal beliefs, regardless of gender.

Data

- General Social Survey (GSS)
- Combined sample (N = 4,740)
 - 2014 (N = 1,589)
 - 2016 (N = 1,807)
 - 2018 (N = 1,499)
- US adults, aged 18 or older

Dependent Variable

Attitudes Towards Women in Politics

"Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women."

- Agree 82.7%
- Disagree 17.3%

Independent Variable

Political Views

"I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people hold are arranged from extremely liberal –point 1 – to extremely conservative –point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?"

- Liberal (1-3) 28.4%
- Moderate (4) 38.6%
- Conservative (5-7) 33.1%

Control Variable

Gender of participant

- Male 45.0%
- Female 55.0%

Analysis

- Cross tabulation
- Chi Square test
- Used SPSS

Results

Figure 1. % of Respondents who Disagree that Women are not Suited for Politics by Political Views: Total Sample

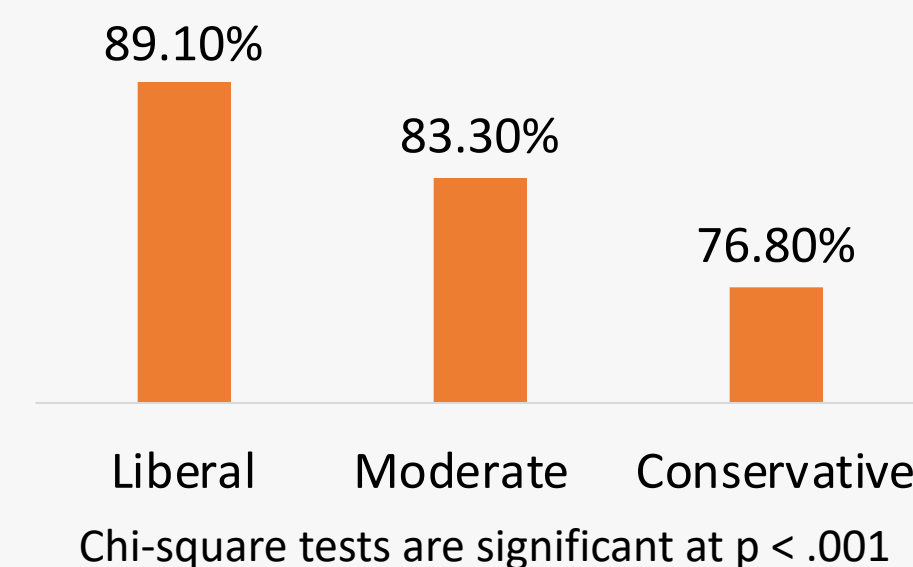


Figure 2. % of Respondents who Disagree that Women are not Suited for Politics by Political Views: Men

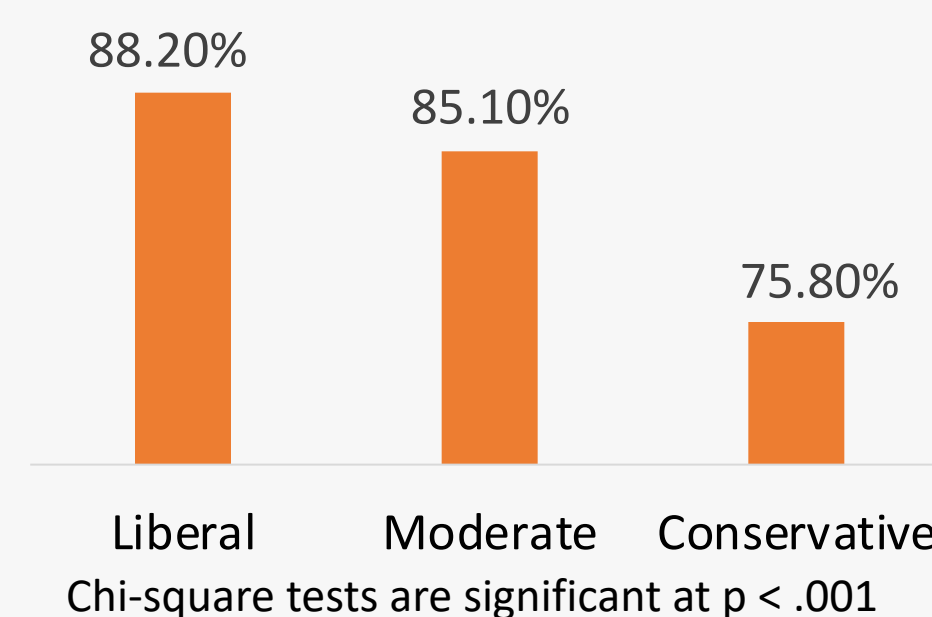
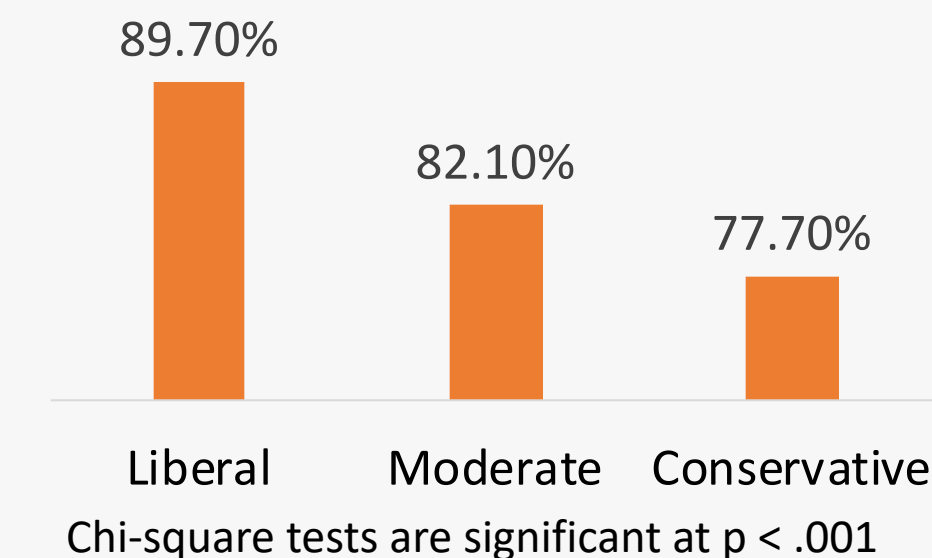


Figure 3. % of Respondents who Disagree that Women are not Suited for Politics by Political Views: Women



Summary of Results

- People with conservative beliefs are more likely to agree that women are not suited for politics.
- There are no significant differences when political beliefs are studied with gender.
- Regardless of the sex of the respondent, people with conservative beliefs are more likely to agree that women are not suited for politics.

Implications

- Women candidates need to be strategic especially when appealing to conservative voters regardless of gender (Mendoza & Dimaria, 2019).
- Previous studies suggest that when women choose to capitalize on gender stereotypes by focusing on issues that are favorably associated, they improve their prospects of electoral success. (Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003).

References

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