

The Moderating Role of Gender on the Relationship Between Moral Foundations and Political Ideology in the U.S.

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Introduction

- Growing gender divide in political ideology in the past decade^{1,2}
- Commitment to certain moral foundations in Moral Foundation Theory (MFT) increase identification with liberal or conservative ideologies^{3,4,5}
- Do men's and women's morality affect their political ideology in the same way and to the same extent?

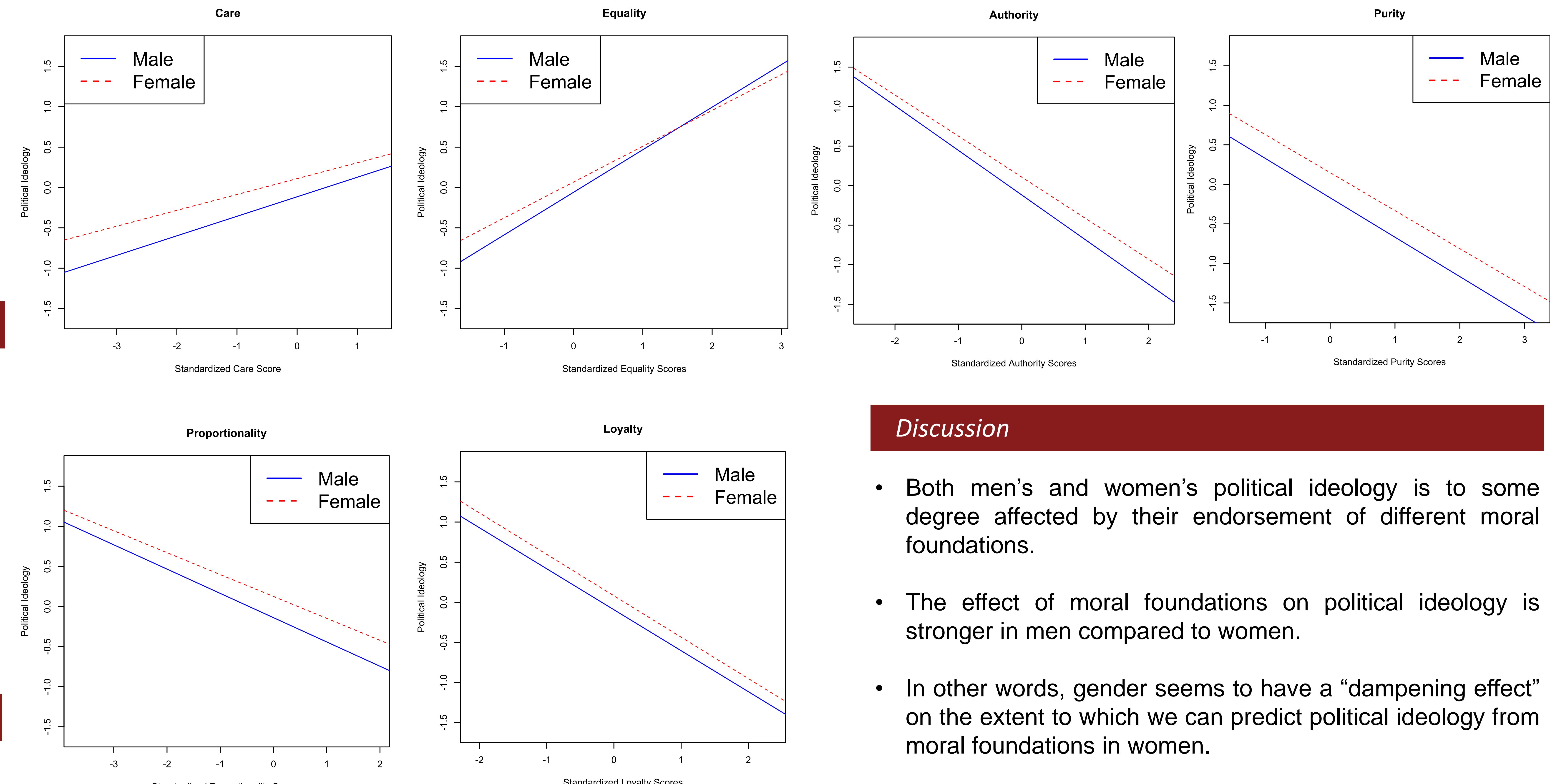
Methodology

- Data from YourMorals.org
- $N = 58952$, from the U.S.
- Measures:
 - Moral Foundations Questionnaire-2
 - Demographics: age, political ideology, gender
- Constructed separate regression models with the moderating effect of gender for the six moral foundations of Care, Equality, Proportionality, Loyalty, Authority, and Purity in R.
- All variables standardized.

Results

- A significant moderation effect of gender is present in every moral foundation, with the exception of Loyalty.

Results



Discussion

- Both men's and women's political ideology is to some degree affected by their endorsement of different moral foundations.
- The effect of moral foundations on political ideology is stronger in men compared to women.
- In other words, gender seems to have a "dampening effect" on the extent to which we can predict political ideology from moral foundations in women.
- This could suggest alternative considerations and factors that women have in their political ideology excluding moral foundations, relative men.

¹Dassonneville, R. (2020). Change and continuity in the ideological gender gap: a longitudinal analysis of left-right self-placement in OECD countries. *European Journal of Political Research*, 60(1), 225–238.

²Saad, L., Jones, S. E., & Fioroni, S. (2024, November 15). Exploring young women's leftward expansion. *Gallup.com*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/649826/exploring-young-women-leftward-expansion.aspx>

³Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029–1046.

⁴Kivikangas, J. M., Fernández-Castilla, B., Järvelä, S., Ravaja, N., & Lönnqvist, J. E. (2021). Moral foundations and political orientation: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 147(1), 55–94. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000308>

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