Faculti Summary

The speaker discusses their research on political ambition, particularly focusing on how individual psychology and traits influence the decision to run for office, with a consideration of gender and socialization. They emphasize the importance of understanding the nuances of gender beyond the traditional binary classification of male and female. Drawing on the work of Monica McDermott, the speaker argues for a more continuous model of gender, encompassing a spectrum of masculinity and femininity rather than a simple dichotomy.

The speaker highlights existing literature that showcases the gender gaps in political behavior and ambition, pointing out that men generally exhibit higher political ambition while women often view themselves as less qualified despite having similar qualifications. The research utilizes the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) to measure masculinity and femininity, finding that higher masculine traits are positively correlated with nascent ambition for office, while higher feminine traits are negatively correlated.

The findings reveal that there is considerable heterogeneity among individuals regarding masculinity and femininity, and that a binary measure of sex still matters but doesn't capture the complexity of political behaviors. The speaker calls for researchers to adopt more granular approaches to studying gender in political contexts. They conclude by acknowledging the evolving nature of gender roles and the importance of understanding these complexities in relation to political participation and leadership.