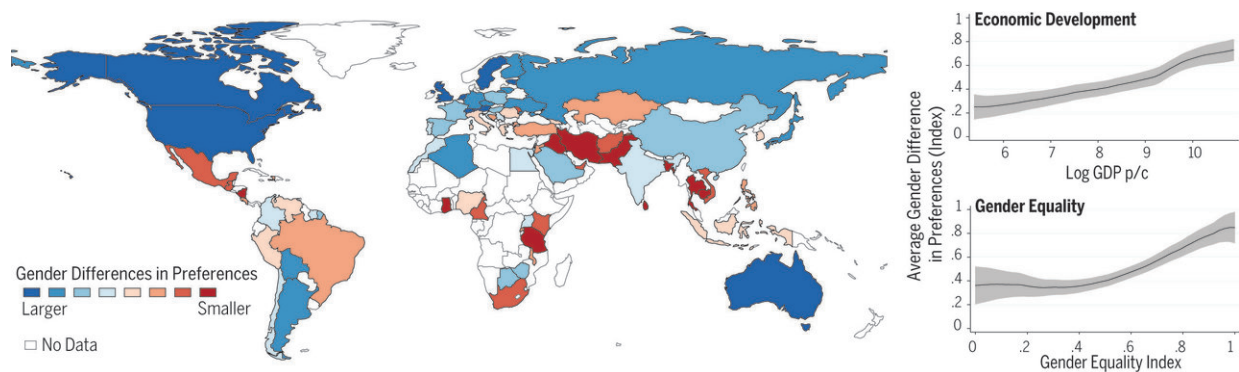


Study shows gender preferences differ more in countries that are more affluent and gender equal

October 19 2018, by Bob Yirka



A figure containing a world map of gender differences in preferences, as well as two graphs showing the relationship of gender differences in preferences to economic development and gender equality. Credit: A. Falk et al., *Science* (2018)

A pair of researchers, one with the University of Bonn, the other the University of California, has found evidence that shows gender preferences differ more in countries that are more affluent and gender equal than in countries that are not. In their paper published in the journal *Science*, Armin Falk and Johannes Hermlé describe their study, which involved analyzing data from an international poll taken to learn the preferences of people around the world.

There are [gender differences](#) surrounding preferences. It is commonly

believed that women in general like chocolate more than men, for example, or that men like watching sports more than women. But do these differences between the genders differ more or less in countries where there is economic wealth and [gender](#) equality? That is what Falk and Hermle sought to find out.

To learn more about certain types of gender preferences, the pair used data stored in the 2012 Gallup World Poll—among other things, it includes information regarding how people feel about general topics such as trust, patience and risk-taking. The data included responses from 80,000 random people from 76 countries. Some of the questions were open-ended while others were designed to show a preference, such as which of two financial decisions a person would make based on risk and reward. More specifically, the researchers focused on answers in the database pertaining to trust, altruism, reciprocity (both positive and negative) and patience.

The researchers found a trend—in those countries where the standard of living was relatively high and where men and women had nearly equal rights, preferences between the genders were wider than for other categories. And the opposite was true for poorer countries with limited rights for women.

The researchers also found that on average, women tended to be more trusting than men, and were more altruistic. But they were also less likely to take risks and were less patient. Men scored lower in positive reciprocity and higher in [negative reciprocity](#).

The researchers do not try to explain their findings, but instead point out that their study offers more evidence showing that higher standards of living in conjunction with social equality offer people of both genders more opportunity to be independent in the choices they make as they live their lives.

More information: Armin Falk et al. Relationship of gender differences in preferences to economic development and gender equality, *Science* (2018). [DOI: 10.1126/science.aas9899](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aas9899)

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