

# Two international samples used for large-scale study of gender differences in moral judgments within cultures

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A trio of researchers in the Department of Psychology at the University

of Southern California has conducted two international sample studies to highlight gender differences in moral judgments within cultures. In their paper published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, Mohammad Atari, Mark Lai, and Morteza Dehghani describe their two studies and what they learned from them.

By their very nature, morals are difficult to pin down. They typically represent an individual's perspective on what they believe to be "right" or "wrong." Morals can also exist within groups, of course, from families, to whole countries or the entire human race. Making things even more complicated is the notion of [gender differences](#) in moral beliefs. The researchers with this new effort noted that research on this topic has generally been limited to within-culture study, or in some cases, looking at limited amounts of cross-cultural data. They wondered if moral differences between genders might be more diverse if looked at from an international perspective. To find out, they carried out two major international studies.

The first study involved accessing data from the research platform YourMorals.org. Visitors to the site are asked a variety of questions to learn more about their moral beliefs. The researchers were able to analyze data from 392,617 people from around the globe. Included in the data were answers to the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, a standardized survey form developed over many years as a way to standardize morality research efforts. In recent years, it has also been used for political purposes.

In the second study, the researchers repeated their efforts in the first study but used data from a host of research efforts. They also used Bayesian inference on the data to highlight patterns.

In analyzing the data from their two studies, the researchers found that women, on average, scored higher on morality measures than did men

when it came to Care, Purity and Fairness. They also found small differences on scores related to Authority or Loyalty. And they found also that there were larger differences on morality scores in societies that were deemed individualistic or where [gender](#) equality was more prevalent.

**More information:** Mohammad Atari et al. Sex differences in moral judgements across 67 countries, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* (2020). [DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2020.1201](https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2020.1201)

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