



Does gender affect behavior across countries?

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The article explores whether gender impacts donation behavior and volunteering across different countries. The findings are relevant to those who work with donors and volunteers in an international context.

This study uses prior research data to analyze prosocial behavior in men and women across nineteen different geographies and cultures.

The authors begin with the premise that there are distinct pathways that lead men and women to engage in giving and volunteering. They then explore whether these gendered pathways vary by country, specifically regarding social capital, educational achievement and financial security. They conclude that cultural context does not significantly impact the different pathways for men and women.

[#Prosocial](#) [#Philanthropy](#) [#Giving](#) [#Gender](#) [#International](#)

Background

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Context



- **The authors pose hypotheses about three different pathways (social capital, motivations and resources) that lead men and women to differ in their giving behavior.** The primary source of data used in this study, the European Social Survey (ESS), was collected in 2003 and the article analyzes responses across eighteen European countries and Israel.
- **The social capital hypothesis.** Women's social networks tend to include more family and neighbors while men's social networks include more friends and business colleagues. The authors pose **two hypotheses**: either **men** will have higher levels of giving and volunteering because they have **higher levels of secular social capital**; or **women** will have higher levels of giving and volunteering because they have **higher levels of religious social capital**.
- **The prosocial motivation hypothesis.** Women tend to rate themselves higher than men with regards to values, empathic concern, moral obligation and caring. Research reveals that **people who view themselves as more empathic and caring are more likely to make charitable donations** and volunteer; therefore, the authors posit that women are more likely to give and volunteer than men.
- **The resources hypothesis.** Historically, men have had a higher level of education across the board, but this is changing and even reversing in many countries. As men still out-earn women in all countries, the third hypothesis offered is that since men have higher levels of resources than women, they are more likely to give and volunteer.

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Take aways & Learnings



- The authors found that **prosocial motivations, social capital and income factors were similar for both genders** across different countries, and that cultural context did not have a significant impact on these pathways, at least not for Europe and Israel.
- **Gendered pathways for giving and volunteering are largely consistent across different cultural contexts, with only a few outliers.** While the authors observed that there was **no direct effect of gender on giving, they note that gender did have a direct effect on volunteering.** The authors suspect there may be other explanations, such as capacity and skills, that mediate the relationship between gender and volunteering.
- The data confirms that men typically have higher levels of resources than women, and that women have higher levels of motivations. **Men and women bring different types of social capital to the table**, but these factors are not significantly impacted by cultural context in the countries studied.
- For practitioners interested in building a donor and volunteer base for the future, the authors predict that **women's increasing advantage in higher educational achievement** (leading to better job opportunities and income) will lead them to give and volunteer more, thus **positioning them as key partners for nonprofits.**
- The authors note that the data was collected in the early 2000s and attitudes and behaviors will likely have shifted since then. The data did not provide evidence as to the intensity of giving and volunteering.



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