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- Title:** Human preferences for facial masculinity change with relationship type and environmental harshness.
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- Keywords:** facial masculinity change; human preferences; environmental harshness; femininity
- Abstract:** In humans (*Homo sapiens*), sexual dimorphism in face shape has been proposed to be linked to quality in both men and women. Although preferences for highquality mates might be expected, previous work has suggested that high quality may be associated with decreased investment in partnerships. In line with a tradeoff between partner quality and investment, human females have been found to prefer higher levels of masculinity when judging under conditions where the benefits of quality would be maximised and the costs of low investment would be minimised. In this study, we examined facultative preferences for masculinity/femininity under hypothetical high and low environmental harshness in terms of resource availability in which participants were asked to imagine themselves in harsh/safe environments. We demonstrate that environmental harshness influences preferences for sexual dimorphism differently according to whether the relationship is likely to be short or long term. Women prefer less-masculine male faces and men prefer less-

feminine female faces for long-term than short-term relationships under conditions of environmental harshness. Such findings are consistent with the idea that high-quality partners may be low investors and suggest that under harsh ecological conditions, both men and women favour a low-quality/ high-investment partner for long-term relationships. For short-term relationships, where investment is not an important variable, preferences for sexual dimorphism were similar for the low and high environmental harshness conditions. These results provide experimental evidence that human preferences may be contingent on the environment an individual finds itself inhabiting. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2010 APA, all rights reserved)

Subjects: *Environmental Effects; *Facial Features; *Femininity; *Masculinity; *Preferences

Classification: Human Experimental Psychology (2300)

Population: Human (10)
Female (40)

Location: United Kingdom

Age Group: Adolescence (13-17 yrs) (200)
Adulthood (18 yrs & older) (300)
Young Adulthood (18-29 yrs) (320)
Thirties (30-39 yrs) (340)
Middle Age (40-64 yrs) (360)

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