Behavioural Foundations of Negative Attitudes Towards Women and their Impacts on Male-Female Competition

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Abstract: Why are men unwilling to allow women to succeed in/occupy certain spaces? How does this unwillingness vary among men and what are the sources of this variation? These are the questions we address in this paper. Our departing hypothesis is that negative or traditional perceptions of women are correlated with low/fragile self-esteem and that (male) individuals who hold these views will be particularly competitive towards women, seeking to maximize their individual fitness by reducing or removing women as competitors. The task at hand requires a three-step research approach, in which we: 1) estimate individuals' levels of self-esteem; 2) assess individuals' perceptions of women; and, 3) analyse whether individuals' levels of self-esteem and its expectedly correlated perceptions of women are associated with individuals' competitive behaviour. Data for all three steps will be collected through an online survey composed of a combination of traditional survey elements to measure participants' demographics and backgrounds (including their explicit views towards women, cognitive abilities, and self-reported self-esteem); and a two-step Implicit Association Test (IAT) to capture participants' implicit levels self-esteem and social competition strategies.