

# Status Ranking: A Hidden Channel to Gender Inequality under Competition

Klarita Gërxhani (European University Institute)

## Abstract

Competition involves two main dimensions, a rivalry for resources and the ranking of relative performances. The latter yields a ranking in terms of social status. The rivalry for resources resulting from competitive incentives has been found to negatively affect women's performance relative to that of men. However, little is known about gender differences in the performance consequences of status ranking. We find no gender differences in effort or performances when there is no status ranking. In anticipation of being ranked men both significantly try harder and perform better than without status ranking. Women decrease their effort. The result is striking. With status ranking (and no rivalry for resources) men exert much more effort and perform much better than women. These results suggest that increased participation in competitive environments could harm women's labor market success along a hidden channel. Aside from these differences in anticipation of ranking, we also observe that experienced ranking affects men and women differently. In post-ranking dictator games men give much less than women after having been publically ranked lowly.