



INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH SEMINAR



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A Competitive World

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Abstract

We elicit willingness to compete in large and representative samples in 62 countries covering all continents. We also shed light on the socialization of boys and girls around the globe by eliciting the importance adults attach to boys' and girls' willingness to compete. Globally, a majority of people are willing to compete against others and find it important that children are willing to compete. Nevertheless, the shares vary strongly across countries and we show that this variation is related to inequality: people in more unequal countries are more competitive and find it more important that children are willing to compete. We also document some near-universal patterns that replicate the main findings of the competitiveness literature at a global scale: in all but one country, men are more competitive than women, and in the vast majority of countries willingness to compete is positively associated with income and level of education. Despite the near-universal gender gap in competitiveness among adults, people in many – mostly Western – countries place greater importance on girls' than boys' willingness to compete.