# Salient Gender Identity and Power Imbalance in a Group Contest

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# Introduction – Group Contests

- Applications for group contests range from warfare, to research and from political campaigns, to rent-seeking activities.
  - Examples: racial conflict, conflict relating to language, religion or culture, political competition, collective rent-seeking...
- Group identity as one of the major components in initiating and escalating conflict.
  - We study the effect of the salience of types of identities and its interaction with group size on group conflict.



## Introduction – Social Identity

#### Identity is one of the main ingredients of the cause of conflict

Sen (2007) Theory The salience of real identities can cause conflict.
 Chowdhury et al. (2016) Experiment Two homogeneous groups – East
 Asians and Caucasians – compete in a contest either without revealing the racial composition or with revealing it.

- Revealing racial composition increases effort.
- Using UK nationals and immigrants, Bhaumik et al. (2020) find no effect in a similar setup.



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#### Gender as Identity

Sen (2007) defines gender as one of the groups through which we define ourselves in daily life.

 Categorisation in terms of gender avoid problem of identification. Observations of membership by gender are usually made without any error (Akerlof and Kranton, 2002).

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# Introduction - Gender Identity in Contests

#### Competitive Environments

(Group) Contest Games Female participants contribute more to the contest (Price and Sheremeta, 2015; Chowdhury et al., 2016; Heine and Sefton, 2018)...

- In Chowdhury et al. (2016), higher efforts in the social identity manipulation are predominantly driven by female participants.
- Females are more prone to the winner's curse (Casari et al., 2007).
- Identity brings in more competitiveness among females in a laboratory setting (Cadsby et al., 2013).

Other Situations Males are more aggressive and competitive in situations in which the conflict is physical and can sustain physical harm. In non-physical conflict situations females are either more aggressive than their male counterparts or there is no significant gender difference (Hyde, 2005).

Some exceptions: Lower degree of competitiveness in female participants (Gneezy et al., 2003)

Phenomenon of female competitiveness in between group competition triggered via group identity?
 Group contests ubiquitous within firms, especially among top management.

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# Introduction – (Power) Imbalance

- Many related applications in the field, such as competition for promotion or tenure, are characterised by a (power) imbalance between social identity groups.
- How does the salience of social identity (gender identity) influence the degree of engagement into competition between groups?
   Interaction with being (dis-)advantaged.





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# **Research Questions**

- We contribute to the field of conflict and identity by investigating
  - Whether (salience of) gender composition alters conflict seeking behaviour in an experimentally controlled environment.
- ▶ We investigate, for the first time, the *interaction* of identity and group size.

#### Our game: Larger groups have more resources.

- How does this interact with salience of social identity?
- Effect on contest investment when in disadvantaged position?

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# Contest Game - Symmetric Control

- Groups of three (partner matching) compete for a prize.
- Individual per-period endowment of T<sub>i</sub> = 60 points.
- Individual prize if winning: z<sub>i</sub> = 40 points.



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# Experimental Design

- Group contest game (Tullock, 1980; Katz et al., 1990), a game typically used in experimental literature to study conflict behaviour (Dechenaux et al., 2015).
  - Players can expend costly resources in order to increase their chance to win a prize (which results in their opponent not winning the prize).
- Repeated play in partner matching (as in Chowdhury et al., 2016).
- ▶ 3 × 2 design to investigate how (salience of) identity and asymmetry affect conflict levels ((A)symmetry



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- ▶ 3 × 2 design to investigate how (salience of) identity and asymmetry affect conflict levels ((A)symmetry as in Kugler et al., 2010).



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# **Experimental Setup**



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# Gender Identity Survey

- We use a social identity questionnaire by (Cameron, 2004)
  - Identity represented on three factors: centrality; ingroup affect; and ingroup ties
  - Its efficacy examined in five studies involving 1,078 respondents, one nonstudent sample, and three group memberships (university, gender, and nationality)
- ▶ 12 item Likert type questionnaire
  - I have a lot in common with other (ingroup members).
  - I feel strong ties to other (ingroup members).
  - I find it difficult to form a bond with other (ingroup members).

# Making Identity Salient in the Contest Game

- ▶ We use emojis that either reflect the gender identity group, or neutral ones.
  - Emojis developed by OpenMoji (2020). OpenMoji graphics are licensed under the Creative Commons Share Alike License 4.0 (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Emojis			
(a) Male Emoji	(b) Female Emoji	(c) Gender-neutral Emoji	
Figure: Er	mojis to make gender social ident	ity salient.	

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# Making Identity Salient in the Contest Game

Runs 1 total 2	Renating time 0 Proce roots & doctors of P1 book you work to buy
Other Group	Your Group
Dament 0 Dament 0	Dana 0 Dana 0
	Your Endowment 60 How many Lothery Trickets weekd you like to buy?
	ок

# Identity Treatment

Your Group	Other Group		
Your Endnerment 65 How many Lothery Tickets would you like to buy?			
	ОК		

Remaining time 24

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## Theory and Hypotheses

$$\max_{a_g} \pi_g \left( \sum_{i \in A} i_a, \sum_{j \in B} b_j \right) = e + \frac{\sum_{a \in A} a_i}{\sum_{a \in A} a_i + \sum_{b \in B} b_j} \cdot z_i - a_g \tag{1}$$

▶ Konrad (2009) (and a myriad of other papers) show that for a group *A*, there exists a multiplicity of equilibria under individualistic preferences characterised by:

$$\sum_{i \in A} a_i = \frac{z_i}{4} \tag{2}$$

► At group level:



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# Theory and Hypotheses

- We use a social preferences model similar to Chen and Li (2009); Zaunbrecher and Riedl (2016); Kolmar and Wagener (2019)
- Agents maximise weighted sum of own and others' payoffs:

$$u_g(i) = (1 - \alpha) \cdot \pi_g + \alpha \cdot \overline{\pi}_{A \setminus g}$$
(3)

- ▶  $\pi_g$  is g's payoff as in Equation 1,  $a_g$  is g's individual investment into the contest,  $\overline{\pi}_{A\setminus g}$  is the average payoff of player g's other group members.
- α is the social-identity parameter, i.e. the weight g puts on group mates' payoff. Parameter α reflects the strength of g's social identity, where a higher α implies a stronger social identity.

$$u_{g}\left(\sum_{i\in A}a_{i},\sum_{j\in B}b_{j}\right) = (1-\alpha)\left[T_{i} + \frac{\sum_{i\in A}a_{i}}{\sum_{i\in A}a_{i} + \sum_{j\in B}b_{j}} \cdot z_{i} - a_{g}\right] + \frac{\alpha}{N_{A} - 1}\left[(N_{A} - 1)\left(T_{i} + \frac{\sum_{i\in A}a_{i}}{\sum_{i\in A}a_{i} + \sum_{j\in B}b_{j}} \cdot z_{i}\right) - \sum_{i\in A\setminus g}a_{i}\right]$$

$$(4)$$

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# Theory and Hypotheses

### Symmetrical Groups

▶ We can show that:

$$\sum_{i \in A} a_i = \frac{z_i (1 - \beta)}{(2 - \alpha - \beta)^2}.$$
 (5)

and

$$\sum_{i \in B} b_j = \frac{z_i (1 - \alpha)}{(2 - \alpha - \beta)^2}$$
(6)

Further,  $\frac{\partial \sum_{i \in A} a_i}{\partial \alpha} \ge 0$ 

**b** Does the social identity parameter  $\alpha$  change in the identity treatment?

• We expect salience to enhance identity, i.e. increasing  $\alpha$ .

#### Hypothesis 1

Total investment will be greater in the Social Identity Treatment.

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## Theory and Hypotheses

#### Power imbalance between competing groups through relative over-representation of one group.

- Prior empirical results suggest that larger groups have a higher probability of winning against smaller groups (Sheremeta, 2018; Ahn et al., 2011; Abbink et al., 2010).
- If we attempt to explain this empirical finding with our model, we have

$$N_A > N_B \rightarrow \sum_{a \in A} i_a > \sum_{b \in B} i_b$$
 (7)

Plugging Equations 5 and 6 delivers

$$\frac{z_i \left(1-\beta\right)}{\left(2-\alpha-\beta\right)^2} > \frac{z_i \left(1-\alpha\right)}{\left(2-\alpha-\beta\right)^2}$$

which simplifies into

 $\alpha > \beta$ 

Social-identity parameter stronger in the large group.

#### Hypothesis 2

Total investment into the contest will be higher in the large group than in the small group

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## Results - Overview



- Group contribution in all treatments significantly exceeds equilibrium prediction.
- Contribution in Identity Treatments does not appear higher.
- Social Identity does increase noise in data.

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## **Results** – Overview

Asymmetric Male Identity

	Average	Standard Deviation	Ν
Symmetric Control Male	47.863	28.473	8
Symmetric Control Female	56.163	40.560	8
Asymmetric Female Control Male	29.486	21.979	7
Asymmetric Female Control Female	83.900	23.104	7
Asymmetric Male Control Male	60.938	22.555	8
Asymmetric Male Control Female	61.500	33.521	8
Symmetric Identity Male	49.188	28.948	8
Symmetric Identity Female	58.812	30.827	8
Asymmetric Female Identity Male	56.400	31.960	7
Asymmetric Female Identity Female	86.786	34.901	7
Asymmetric Male Identity Male	64.812	22.271	8
Asymmetric Male Identity Female	52.800	16.791	8
Total	58.833	30.471	92
Symmetric Control		• •	
Asymmetric Male Control			
Asymmetric Female Identity	н		

Average Group Contribution

- Female participants contribute more to the contest when in a larger group.
  - This is true whether or not the gender identity is salient.
- When male participants are in a larger group, they do not outbid their female competitors.

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## Results - Overview



- For all treatments, overall effort decreases over time.
  - Some display an initial increase in effort.

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# Difference between contest investment in female and male groups



- Female groups invest relatively more into the contest when in an advantaged position.
  - I.e., when in larger group, Asymmetric Female treatments

 Effect more pronounced if gender identity is not salient (Wilcoxon test,

$$N = 30, z = -3.215, p = 0.0013$$
).

Asymmetric Male Negative gender gap when identity is salient, but gap absent without salience? (Wilcoxon test, N = 32, z = 0.603, p = 0.5641). Symmetric Small yet not statistically significant difference between female and male group investment (Wilcoxon test, N = 34, z = -0.827, p = 0.4084).

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group investment (Wilcoxon test, N = 34, z = -0.827, p = 0.4084).

## Hypothesis 1 - Total Investment Greater in the Social Identity Treatment



- No significant difference between Control and Identity treatments.
- Making Gender Identity salient does not induce higher contest engagement.

	(1)	(2)		
	Group Contr	ibution in $t$		
Asymmetric Female	-0.394			
Control	(2.88)			
Asymmetric Male	1.100			
Control	(3.23)			
Symmetric Identity	0.732			
	(3.02)			
Asymmetric Female	2.292			
Identity	(3.57)			
Asymmetric Male	-0.085			
Identity	(2.85)			
Female	$3.270^{**}$	$4.462^{*}$		
	(1.64)	(2.50)		
Identity		1.851		
		(1.96)		
Female ×		-2.300		
Identity		(2.90)		
Lagged Group	$0.787^{***}$	$0.788^{***}$		
Contribution	(0.02)	(0.02)		
Lagged Other Group	$0.054^{*}$	$0.058^{**}$		
Contribution	(0.03)	(0.03)		
Period	$-0.893^{***}$	$-0.875^{***}$		
	(0.26)	(0.26)		
Constant	$9.729^{***}$	$8.999^{***}$		
	(2.63)	(2.47)		
Number of observations	864	864		
Number of panels	96	96		
Within model R-squared	0.265	0.265		
Between model R-squared	0.978	0.978		
Overall R-squared	0.693	0.693		
* $p < 0.10,$ ** $p < 0.05,$ ***	p < 0.01			
Clustered standard errors in parentheses.				

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# Hypothesis 2 – Total Investment Higher in the Large Group



- Some evidence that large groups invest more.
  - Salience of social identity crowds out investment in female groups.

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
		Group Contr	ibution in $t$		
Large	$5.132^{**}$	$4.499^{*}$	5.211	7.584*	
	(2.08)	(2.58)	(3.50)	(4.14)	
Female	$5.159^{**}$	4.526	$5.164^{**}$	$10.198^{*}$	
	(2.24)	(3.14)	(2.28)	(5.24)	
Identity	0.908	0.890	0.981	6.441	
	(2.03)	(2.01)	(3.08)	(4.01)	
Large $\times$		1.266		-3.510	
Female		(4.00)		(5.11)	
Large $\times$			-0.147	-5.089	
Identity			(3.97)	(4.96)	
Identity $\times$				$-10.443^{*}$	
Female				(5.80)	
Large $\times$				9.311	
Identity $\times$ Female				(7.51)	
Lagged Group	$0.743^{***}$	$0.743^{***}$	$0.743^{***}$	$0.732^{***}$	
Contribution	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	
Lagged Other Group	$0.055^{*}$	$0.054^{*}$	$0.055^{*}$	$0.059^{*}$	
Contribution	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	
Round	$-1.256^{***}$	$-1.259^{***}$	$-1.256^{***}$	$-1.290^{***}$	
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.37)	
Constant	$11.426^{***}$	$11.825^{***}$	$11.384^{**}$	$9.171^{*}$	
	(3.96)	(3.97)	(4.51)	(4.97)	
Number of observations	558	558	558	558	
Number of panels	62	62	62	62	
Within model R-squared	0.327	0.327	0.327	0.329	
Between model R-squared	0.966	0.966	0.966	0.963	
Overall R-squared	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.689	
* $p < 0.10$ , ** $p < 0.05$ , *** $p < 0.01$					
Clustered standard errors in	Clustered standard errors in parentheses.				

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# Social Preferences



- Using ingroup bias of own group (α) and other group (β), we represent group contribution by a surface in the ∑<sub>i∈A</sub> a<sub>i</sub> × α × β-space
- Group investment significicantly higher than prediction (Wilcoxon test, N = 96, z = 7.908, p < 0.0001).

Significant positive effect for social-identity parameter α.

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- Significant positive effect for social-identity parameter α.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Group	Contribution	n in $t$
Alpha	8.413**	$10.195^{*}$	$7.354^{*}$
	(3.29)	(5.38)	(3.95)
Identity $\times$		-2.968	
Alpha		(6.82)	
Female ×			4.228
Alpha			(9.99)
Identity	-0.966	0.355	-1.040
	(1.66)	(3.28)	(1.64)
Beta	5.328	5.353	5.311
	(4.42)	(4.50)	(4.45)
Female	$3.135^{*}$	$3.095^{*}$	1.184
	(1.68)	(1.71)	(5.53)
Lagged Group	0.787***	$0.786^{***}$	0.786***
Contribution	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Lagged Other Group	$0.055^{*}$	$0.055^{*}$	$0.057^{**}$
Contribution	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Round	$-0.887^{***}$	$-0.891^{***}$	$-0.886^{***}$
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Constant	4.502	3.877	4,963
	(3.25)	(3.25)	(3.63)
Number of observations	864	864	864
Number of panels	96	96	96
Within model R-squared	0.265	0.265	0.265
Between model R-squared	0.980	0.979	0.980
Overall R-squared	0.695	0.695	0.695
* $p < 0.10$ , ** $p < 0.05$ , ***	p < 0.01		
Clustered standard errors in	parentheses.		
	-		

# Conclusion

- Often, gender difference in promotion attributed to tendency to shy away from competition on the part of females (Lawless and Fox, 2008; Davies-Netzley, 1998).
- Here: Controlled study investigating degree of engagement in between-group contest against opposite gender identity players.
  - Vary salience of gender identity to test if this affects behaviour and interacts with own gender identity.

## Our Results Show

- Being in a position of power can drive competitiveness.
  - Larger, more powerful groups invest more into the contest.
- Male and female groups react very differently to the salience



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# Conclusion

## Male and female groups react very differently to the salience of gender identity.

Female-dominated contest Salient gender identity *decreases* gender gap.

Male-dominated contest Salient gender identity increases gender gap.

- Result not driven via social identity or in-group cohesion.
  - Both social-identity parameter α and Pre-Game and Post-Game SVO do not differ by gender identity.

# **Power Analysis**

▶ We base the power analysis on the results of Chowdhury et al. (2016), in specific between the treatments *Baseline* and *Race*.

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#### Table 5

Mean (St. Dev.) Individual efforts per period separated by gender.

		Baseline	Color	Race
Male	Mean	11.523	11.313	12.407
	St. dev.	(11.599)	(11.655)	(11.307)
	No. subjects	35	38	36
Female	Mean	11.718	14.184	18.265
	St. dev.	(11.229)	(13.312)	(13.814)
	No. subjects	37	34	36
All	Mean	11.623	12.669	15.336
	St. dev.	(11.407)	(12.543)	(12.954)
	No. subjects	72	72	72

Depending on whether we base the effect size on all participants, or females, we get:

▶ Between 16-36 groups for the 3 versus 3 , 12-30 for the 3 versus 5.

## **Power Analysis**



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## Literature

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