

# COOPERATION AND COMPETITION IN ACADEMIA: HOW TO MAKE IT BENEFICIAL?

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# Science and Competition

Competition has been always present in scientific life

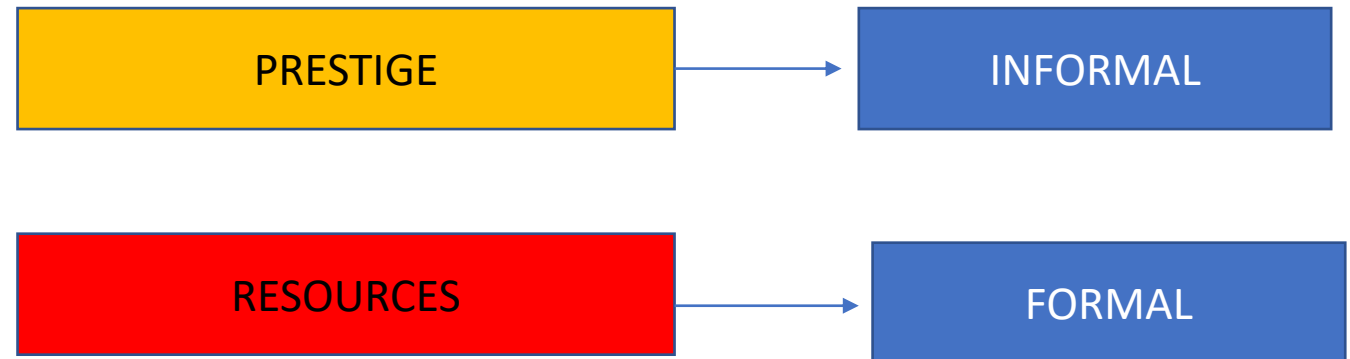


It is present at very different levels:

- To discover something first, to publish something first (Merton, 1954, Hagstrom, 1974)
- Recognition of colleagues/peers (Cole & Cole, 1967)
- For research grants (Lepori et al, 2007)
- Job and position in universities, research institutes (Stephan, 2012, p. 170; Waaijer, 2015)
- Scientometrics (impact factor, citations)

There is competition among:

- Researchers
- Among research groups
- Scientific disciplines - Research Institutes and Universities - Journals
- NOBEL-Competition



# COMPETITION AT THE DOCTORAL LEVEL

## **Formal**

- For acceptance in a Doctoral Program
- In a highly prestigious Doctoral School
- For a well known/highly acknowledged/powerful supervisor
- For scholarships (full time/part time student, excellence programmes)
- For foreign placements, semesters spent abroad
- Publications
- Scientific contests

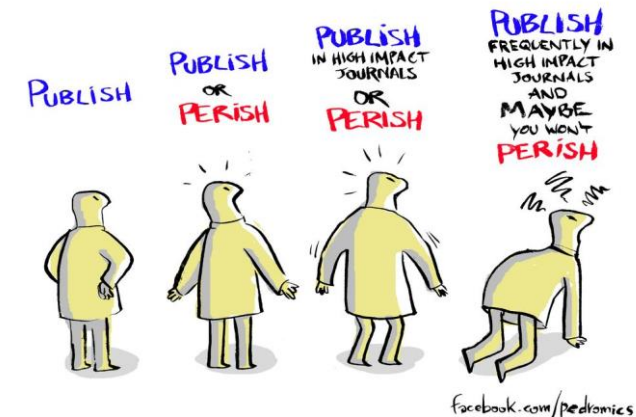
## **Informal**

- Closeness to supervisor
- Speed of progress
- The interest of the research topic
- Smartness (seminar participation)
- Professionalism
- Presentation skills
- Language proficiency
- Future employment/career prospects
- Male/female

# INTENSITY OF COMPETITION

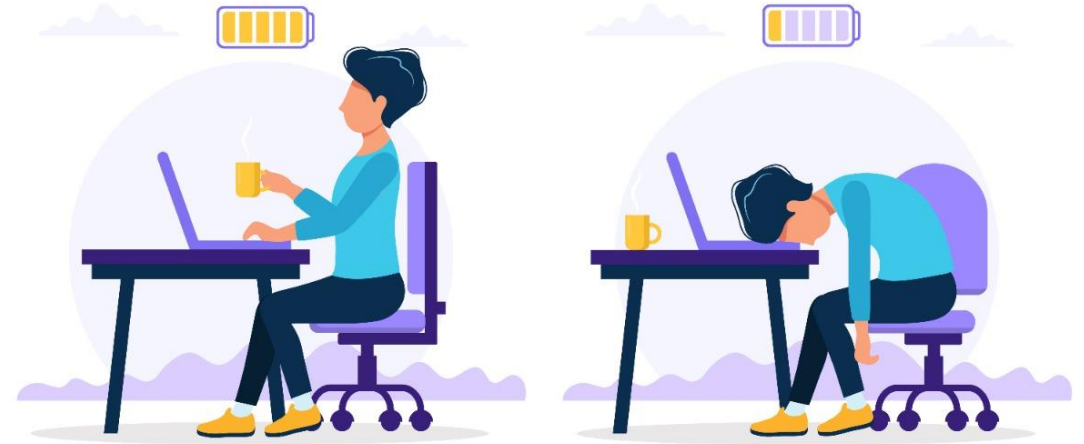
- Scientific level
- Prestige of the Doctoral School
- Excellence/giftedness of the doctoral students
- Requirements for the doctoral degree
- Career pressure/available attractive positions

## THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIA



# Pressure to achieve

- May be constant
- Ability to cope with stress (challenge/threat psychology)
- Competitive attitudes
- Coping with winning and losing (refused paper, negative critical remarks .....



# DIFFERENT COMPETITIVE ORIENTATIONS

Source: Orosz, G, .... Fülöp, M. (2018) *Frontiers in Psychology: Personality and Social Psychology*.

## 1. Hypercompetitive attitude

- Having a strong desire of winning at any cost or by any means.

## 2. Self-developmental attitude

- Having a desire for excellence and personal growth and development, bringing out the best one can do, seeking challenges, mastering the task

## 3. Competition avoidance

- *Fear of being a loser* refers to the dislike and the avoidance of competition due to the anticipation of being a loser
- *Anxiety driven competition avoidance* refers to the heightened anxiety and pressure during the process of competition

## 4. Indifference:

- Refers to the lack of interest in competition, lack of motivation to be involved in competition which leads to the avoidance of competition

**PATTERNS OF  
COMPETITIVENESS**

**APPROACH**

SELF-  
DEVELOPMENTAL

COMPLEX  
COMPETITIVE

HYPERCOMPETITIVE

**AVOIDANT**

AVOIDANT

FEAR OF LOSING

INDIFFERENT

# Self-developmental competition/mutual development

- Being inspired by fellow doctoral students
- Learning about strengths and weaknesses by comparing/competing with fellow doctoral students
- Mastery by competition with others





# DESTRUCTIVE COMPETITION- HYPERCOMPETITION

- **Federick Stampel**, a social psychologist who in 2011 was suspended for falsified his data and published false results like “people tend to stereotype more when they surrounded by trash” and “meat make people less sociable”.



# Like a “snowball of lies”

- As Stampel mentioned in his book (“org. name “Ontsporing”) before starting faking data, he was using p-backing and file-drawer to “adjust” his results in a way they match with the hypothesis.
- He was desperately searching for publishing good papers in the best journals and gain recognition among his colleagues.
- And in this ambitious goal, the research stopped at all when he started to **fake the complete data.**



# COPING WITH WINNING AND LOSING

# 1. BALANCED

EMOTIONS

BEHAVIOUR

WINNING

JOY AND ACTIVATION

SEEKING NEW  
CHALLENGES

LOSING

SADNESS AND  
FRUSTRATION

STANDING UP

## 2.NARCISSISTIC/AGGRESSIVE

EMOTIONS

BEHAVIOUR

WINNING

SELF-ENHANCEMENT

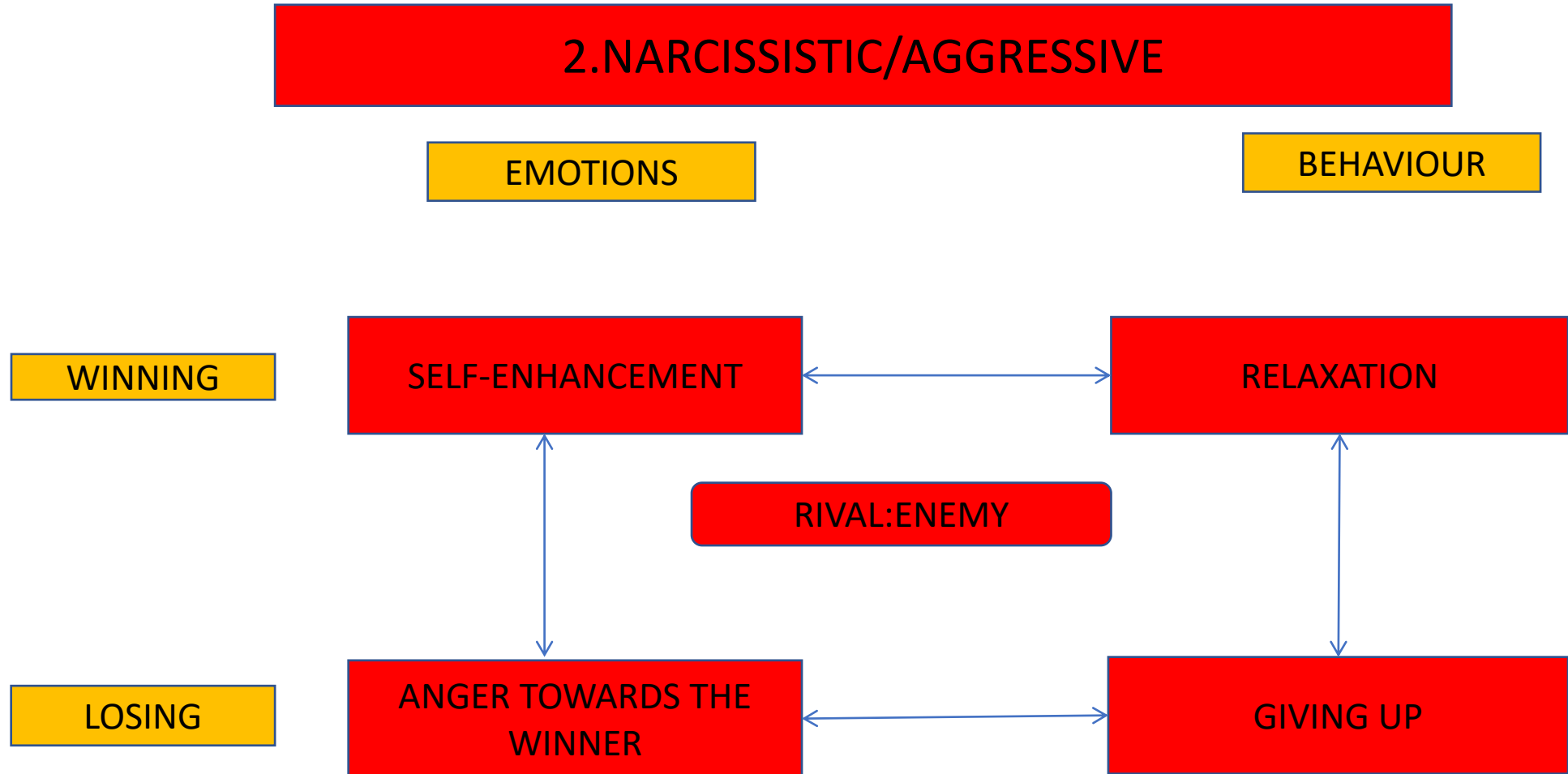
RELAXATION

RIVAL:ENEMY

LOSING

ANGER TOWARDS THE  
WINNER

GIVING UP



# 3. EMBARRASSEMENT-GIVING UP

EMOTIONS

BEHAVIOUR

WINNING

EMBARRASSEMENT

AVOIDING COMPETITION AND WINNING

LOSING

SELF-DEVALUATION

GIVING UP



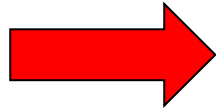
# COOPERATION AMONG DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- Covering courses (sharing materials, joint studying, preparations for exams)
- Informational support (sharing info on resources, supervisors, job opportunities, scholarships etc.)
- Social support (discussing worries, difficulties, decisions)
- Professional cooperation (joint data collection, joint research, sharing authorship)
- Child care



# INNOVATION? WHO WINS?

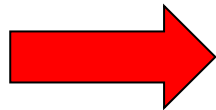
Bullinger & Moesline, 2010



INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH WORK

SUPERFICIAL, FAKE COOPERATION

NO!!!!



HIGH LEVEL COLLABORATION



# COOPERATIVE COMPETITION COMBINATION!

