

*Female Behavioral Economics: How Female Swarm Intelligence Sorts and Filters Men.*  
By Florian Willet. Self-published, 2011 (in German), 2016 (in English). 256 pages.  
No price on book but book listed at \$7.00 on amazon.com. Review by J. Steven Svoboda.

German lawyer and economist Florian Willet has published a remarkable book. *Female Behavioral Economics: How Female Swarm Intelligence Sorts and Filters Men* turns out to be outstanding in mostly desirable ways though a bit of “personality” comes through in the end. Warning: this review contains a lot of quotes from the book but I can’t help myself as it’s so well written and engaging.

I had the great pleasure of meeting the author at a conference last year. He is relatively young, (for what it’s worth) completed at least one New York City Marathon in the upper 1% of participants, and is brilliant. Willet explains many aspects of women’s behavior in a way that mostly leans towards insightful objectivity. Why, for example, do women appear to get so incensed “when men behave completely according to their nature?” They have learned through evolution that reliance on each other’s judgments of men (the “swarm intelligence” of the title) leverages the value of their own evaluations and provides a form of insurance against idiosyncratic misjudgments, be they false positives or false negatives.

Willet nails the existential differences between (straight) men and (straight) women. “Only men who stand out in the most entertaining and exceptional way will gain the most privileged access to women. Women, meanwhile, always have sexual access to men whether these women are kindergarten teachers or executives. To avoid being overlooked, men have to paint a picture of themselves as different from other men. Women are not overlooked because they can catch the eye at any time by simply appearing in a low-cut blouse.” Or more succinctly, “There are no ‘masculine wiles’.” And “there is no male version of the Cinderella tale.”

If you are a woman of average attractiveness, you have no problem finding a man, but a man in the middle may have to engage in huge risk-taking to have a chance to find a woman. “Men have to embrace risks that women are spared. This is their duty to themselves as men.” Another way of formulating the same point comes later when the author writes, “In their partner selection, women have molded men into all-or-nothing players.” “The many male corpses on the field of history were the price which had to be paid to determine the winners. And winners have always been necessary so that women could identify the most attractive sexual partners.”

The author writes well. “The female drive to adhere to the collective verdict is so strong that most women have astonishingly little compunction with stealing a man from another woman in her circle – even from her best friend – if he genuinely seems to be worth it.... It’s easier to find a new best friend than a top life or sex partner.”

One interesting point that derives from all this and yet that I don't remember hearing previously is that men employ the same cool calculation regarding partners AFTER they have had sex in which women engage BEFORE having sex. "Women are frequently taken aback by the coolness and distance that men sometimes demonstrate after the first time they have sex. Women don't grasp that men are now conducting the same kind of assessment they [the women] were conducting earlier."

Willet has a couple good points, one that women blame men both when women aren't satisfied (when there aren't enough high-achieving men to go around) and also when men are not able to satisfy their needs. Another interesting gem is Willet's statement that if any woman is single and doesn't want to be, all she need to do is be less unreasonably choosy and she will have no problem finding men. The reverse is NOT true for men.

Willet is funny and spot-on in talking about high-achieving women who can't find men with a similar level of accomplishment, coming up with a very appropriate and creative extended analogy: "Given that women don't seem willing to change their expectations, it's as if a group of women had gotten on a bus that had previously been occupied almost exclusively by men, had then taken over half the seats, and to top it all, began to complain from the comfort of their seats that there were now fewer men sitting there than before!"

The author deftly debunks claims of employment discrimination against women and then goes further to undercut justifications for employment quotas that are selectively applied. "Why is there no quota system that says half of all movers have to be female? Helicopter pilots and deep-sea divers who risk their lives on the job are virtually all male. Bodyguards and security guards also. It's the same thing when it comes to explosive experts and high-rise window cleaners. Are there quotas for these professions? Indeed there aren't and one might well wonder why not." After all, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; if we are going to have quotas for the high-paying jobs, why should we not have them for the low-paying ones?

"What women are doing when they bemoan the incompatibility of career and children is to complain that they have half a cake while one of two men gets to have a whole cake. Each of the two women compares herself with the winner yet neither of them compares herself with the loser.... If women ask for a legal means to compensate for the career setbacks experienced by mothers then they're also asking that the state should give all women opportunities that only men who get to enjoy the whole cake have."

"[W]omen cannot have everything. Either both women come out ahead of the male losers but worse than the male winner, or they have to fight it out in a risky or exhausting all-out competition, as men do among themselves. In this case only one of them gets to have the best possible combination of children and career while the other ends up with absolutely nothing. Any other arrangement would be unfair to the male losers. Women don't get this because they don't have any more to do with

male losers.... However, they're still happy to have their expenses paid by tapping into the resources of the male loser."

Here it is in a nutshell. "Really, for women to denounce something and still benefit from it, takes the concept of double standards to a whole new level. As long as women hope into bed with bad guys, bad guys will continue to spread their genes – and have a whole lot of fun doing so. As long as pretty women enjoy lounging around on glamorous yachts and wearing chic designer clothes, there will always be a steady supply of men striving to accumulate the necessary wealth, even if it means acting like an uncompromising jerk to do so."

"Women are radically more biased against those men who are less productive and less successful, and drawn towards highly productive and successful men, than men who favor young over mature women. Yet, women complain far more vociferously about the beauty and slimness cults, supposed caused entirely by superficial men, than men who complain that women cause them to take on huge financial risks and toil away until they get a heart attack."

The book is not perfect. First, the author needs to find a better translator and a skilled editor. We find a level of inexact terminology that persists throughout while very occasionally veering into what even to me seems like at least a hint of misogyny.

Towards the end of the book, the author's trenchant analysis starts to be subsumed in some speculative arguments. Some are admirable, as his radical argument that if women are to be compensated for the effects on their work of their taking off time due to a pregnancy, a choice men don't have, the in fairness "men's sex lives [should] not be affected by their active pursuit of a career.... No, of course you can't force a woman to occasionally provide her male colleagues with sex. However, men are forced to subsidize both the reproductive choices of their female co-workers and help them plan their careers."

The author further suggests that if women can lie about being pregnant in job interviews without consequence (in the US of course they can't be asked about pregnancy), then "where is the legal protection for men's lying and cheating in relationships?" "Pubescent boys who are distracted in the summer by half-naked classmates should be regularly given time off – without penalty of course – to masturbate, and in this way satisfy deeply natural, intensively felt needs, just as women are allowed to take time off to give birth and care for young children and satisfy their deepest, most natural needs." Willet does somewhat overstate the (obviously undeniable) importance of sex to all heterosexual men.

The author strikes me as generally fair to both men and women, calling each to account for their own gender-specific inequities. "If women are of the opinion that it's discrimination when men prefer young and fertile women to their older

counterparts, they have probably never considered whether it is discriminatory that women prefer successful men to unsuccessful ones?"

At the very end of the book, the author reveals his very anti-marriage views, most egregiously when he writes, "Marriage is not an expression of love but of mistrust. A person who won't love without a safety net probably has absolutely no idea what true love is or what forms it can take." A bit extreme, that.

Three cheers for originality and for fresh insights. Don't miss Florian Willet!