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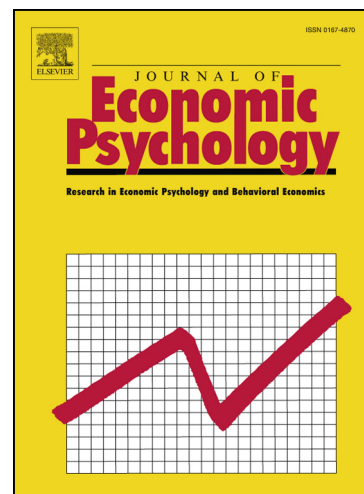
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A Field Experiment on the Impact of a Prior Donor's Social Status on Subsequent Charitable Giving

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Abstract

We study the effect of a prior donor on subsequent charitable giving in a natural field experiment and investigate in particular whether his social status matters for subsequent giving. To do so, we trailed a person asking for donations in Cologne's streetcar network while (1) either implementing an initial donor or not and (2) varying the apparent social status of the initial donor. We find that other passengers are more prone to give when there is an initial donor, with this effect being amplified when he seems to have a high social status. Further analyses reveal that women tend to react stronger than men to the prior donor's status.

Keywords: social status; charitable giving; field experiment

JEL classification: C93; D64; H41

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