

Abstract #: 490

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Abstract Title: Doing Good or Undoing Harm - Framing Voluntary Contributions to Climate Change Mitigation

Abstract Text:

We report results from a framing study in the context of individual contributions to climate change mitigation. In this study, we frame a request to contribute to a climate change mitigation project either as a donation (positive framing/'doing good' framing) or as a neutralization of own CO₂ emissions (negative framing/'undoing harm' framing). Building on the literature on goal framing and public good provision we hypothesize that the framing of the contribution decision affects both the probability to contribute and the size of contributions. Furthermore, we expect that individuals react differently to the framing depending on their underlying moral motivations, their prior experience with contributions to mitigation projects as well as their involvement in the decision situation. Based on data from an online survey in Switzerland we find that the framing influences both the probability to contribute and the size of contributions for specific types of individuals: While a great share of individuals contributes more in the positive framing, the negative framing seems to activate individuals who are 'loss averse' in terms of altruistic utility, have no prior experience with contributions to climate change mitigation or were little involved in the decision situation. Overall, our results suggest that for a substantial share of our respondents feelings of 'warm glow' and the framing of the contribution as a donation seem to be stronger motivators for making contributions. Moreover, it seems that many individuals have not yet developed robust preferences for making contributions to climate change mitigation and are therefore particularly susceptible to contextual cues.