The Effect of Religious Affiliation on Social Preferences

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Economic actions are determined by a variety of social and cultural influences. Unlike the ideal rational economic actor, an individual will frequently fail to make optimal, selfish decisions. In this study, we examine the effect of religious influences on such decisions. Specifically, I test whether "Catholic Guilt" is a real phenomena or simply a superstition. The study compares the actions of Catholic, Protestant, and non-religious subjects while playing Ultimatum and Dictator games. Using standard regression analysis, I find the extent to which guilt affects the economic decisions of Catholic players, revealing a component of the complex relationship between religious belief and worldly action.

Information about the Author:
J.R. Schatz is a triple major in mathematics, philosophy, and economics. He is especially interested in the relationship between thought, language, and action, leading to a strong interest in game theory. As a lifelong Catholic, the effects of religious beliefs on action are especially compelling.

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