

# Effects of Parental Background on Other-regarding Preferences in Children<sup>\*</sup>

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## Abstract

Other-regarding preferences are central for the ability to solve collective action problems and thus for society's welfare. We study how the formation of other-regarding preferences during childhood is related to parental background. Using binary-choice dictator games to classify subjects into other-regarding types, we find that children of less educated parents are less altruistic and more spiteful. This link is robust to controlling for a range of child, family, and peer characteristics, and is attenuated for smarter children. The results suggest that less educated parents are either less efficient to instill social norms or their children less able to acquire them.

**Keywords:** other-regarding preferences, altruism, spite, experiments with children, family background, education

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## **Abstrakt**

Sociální preference jednotlivce hrají klíčovou při rozhodování zda spolupracovat a tudíž pro blahobyt společnosti. V tomto článku studujeme, zda a jak formování sociálních preferencí souvisí se socio-ekonomickým statutem rodičů. Série experimentálních her nám umožňuje děti klasifikovat podle typu jejich sociálních preferencí. Zjistili jsme, že děti méně vzdělaných rodičů jsou méně altruistické a více závidí. Efekt vzdělání rodičů je zeslaben u dětí, které mají vysoké kognitivní schopnosti. Tyto výsledky implikují, že méně vzdělaní rodiče jsou buď méně efektivní při vštěpování sociálních norem svým dětem či jejich děti méně schopné tyto normy internalizovat.