

HARNESSING THE IDENTIFIABILITY EFFECT TO ENHANCE
PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR REDISTRIBUTIVE TAXES

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Abstract

This article proposes a new method of increasing public support for redistribution through tax-and-transfer law by harnessing the psychological phenomenon known as the *identifiability effect*. Enhancing such support is crucial, as implementing or sustaining redistributive measures can be difficult in the face of unsympathetic public opinion. The article reports on the findings of two original, pre-registered experiments that substantiate the theoretical argument. The findings reveal that minimal and noninvasive identification of a single recipient can enhance people's support for redistributive taxes—including direct income transfers—that would benefit the entire group of anonymous welfare beneficiaries. These results are relevant for the literatures on redistribution and the identifiability effect, as well as for policymakers.