

# Social Norms, Identity and the Green Electricity Mix

Joëlle Velvart\*

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## **Abstract**

Although social norms have been established as an incentive for pro- environmental behaviour, the evidence is ambiguous regarding the strength and direction of the influence. This study provides a theoretical framework for recent experimental findings about the effectiveness of social norms and combines identity and norms as motives for the private provision of a public good. I investigate the influence of social norms in a heterogeneous population in a model of voluntary contributions to a global public good. Identity and identity group norms are introduced to analyse norm compliance with group and population norms. Evolutionary dynamics reveal multiple evolutionarily stable strategies. The model shows whether a social norms signal used as a policy instrument can increase private contributions and move the population to a higher contribution equilibrium. Using survey and field data, I then test the model predictions for the demand of “green” electricity tariffs in Switzerland. The insights gained from the model and the empirical evidence are valuable for the use of social norms as a policy instrument.

*Keywords:* public good, green electricity, social norms, group identity

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\* University of Basel. joelle.velvart@unibas.ch. University of Basel, Faculty of Business and Economics, Peter-Merian Weg 6, 4002 Basel, Switzerland.