

Money makes people right-wing and inegalitarian

6 February 2014, by Peter Dunn

(Phys.org) —Lottery winners tend to switch towards support for a right-wing political party and to become less egalitarian, according to new research on UK data by Professor Andrew Oswald of the University of Warwick and Professor Nattavudh Powdthavee of the London School of Economic and the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Their study, published as a new University of Warwick working paper under the title "Does Money Make People Right-Wing and Inegalitarian: A Longitudinal Study of Lottery Wins", shows that the larger the win, the more people tilt to the right. The study uses information on thousands of people and on [lottery](#) wins up to 200,000 pounds sterling. The [authors](#) say it is the first research of its kind.

The authors believe their paper has wide implications for how democracy works. Professor Oswald said he had become doubtful of the view that morality was an objective choice. "In the voting booth, monetary self-interest casts a long shadow, despite people's protestations that there are intellectual reasons for voting for low tax rates."

"We are not sure exactly what goes on inside people's brains", said Nick Powdthavee, "but it seems that having money causes people to favour conservative right-wing ideas. Humans are creatures of flexible ethics."

The authors believe their paper has wide implications for how democracy works. Professor Oswald said he had become doubtful of the view that morality was an objective choice. "In the [voting booth](#), monetary self-interest casts a long shadow, despite people's protestations that there are intellectual reasons for voting for low tax rates."

The authors' paper comments that:

"The causes of people's political attitudes are largely unknown. One possibility is that individuals' attitudes towards politics and redistribution are motivated by deeply ethical view.

Our study provides empirical evidence that voting choices are made out of self-interest."

Using a nationally representative sample of lottery winners in the UK – the British Household Panel Survey – the researchers have been able to explore the observed longitudinal changes in political allegiance of the bigger winners to the smaller winners. The effect is also sizeable. Winning a few thousand pounds in the lottery has an effect on right-wingness that is just under half of completing a good standard of education (i.e. A-levels) at high school.

The lottery winning effect is far stronger for males than females. The authors are not sure why.

The study has nobody who wins millions and millions. "We'd certainly love to be able to track the views of the rare giant winners", said Professor Oswald, "if any lottery company would like to work with our research team."

More information: Read the paper here:

www.powdthavee.co.uk/resources...2014PowdthaveeOs.pdf

Provided by University of Warwick

APA citation: Money makes people right-wing and inegalitarian (2014, February 6) retrieved 14 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-money-people-right-wing-inegalitarian.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.