



Choosing More Aggressive Commitment Contracts for Others than for the Self

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Motivating Example

Imagine you set a goal to submit a manuscript by the end of the year. To help meet your goal, you are considering a commitment contract—which requires you to donate either to

- Nature Conservancy; or
- Friends of Coal

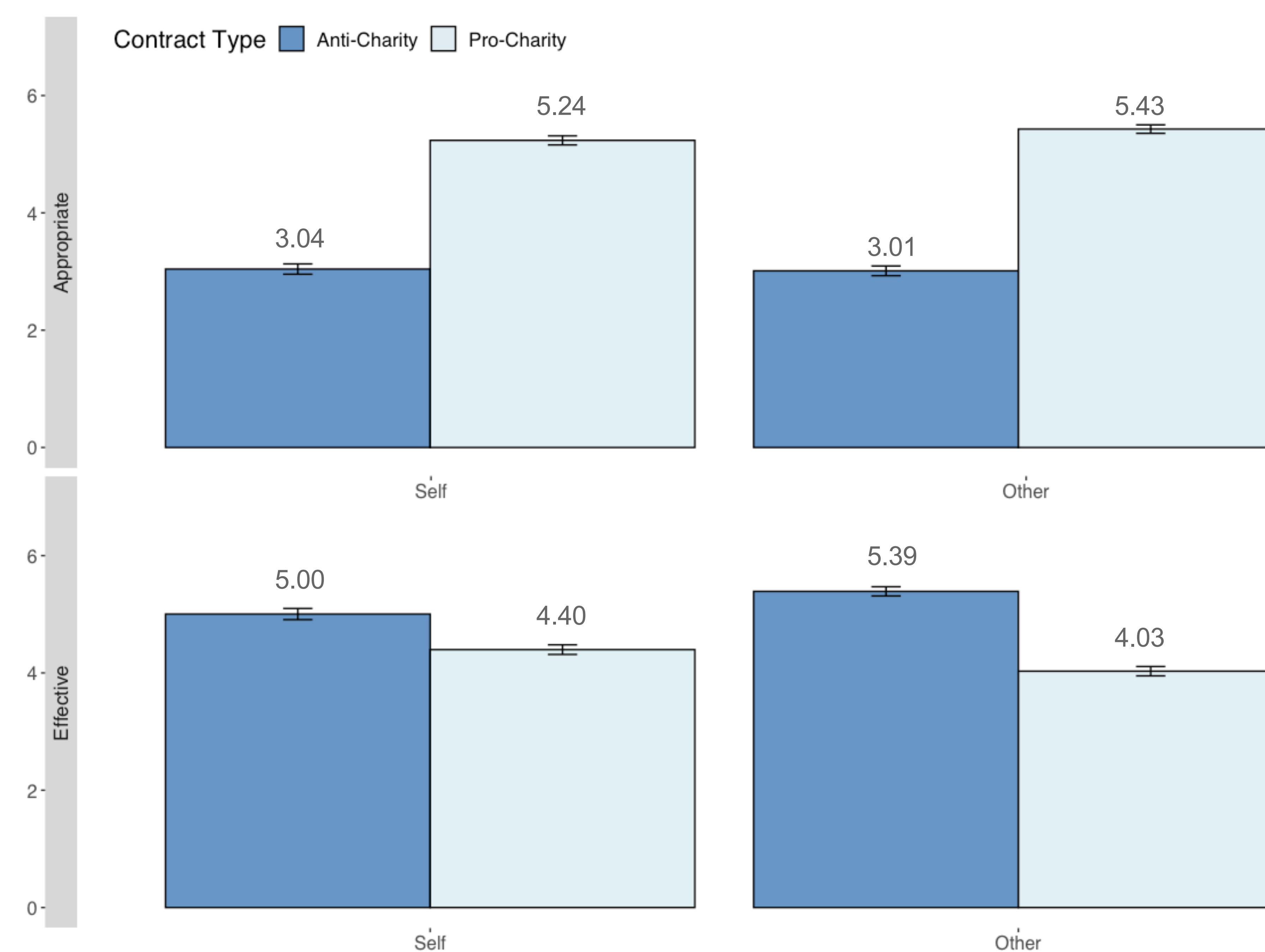
if you do not submit a manuscript by December 31st. Even though you know you'll be incredibly motivated to write every day if failing to means having to donate to an organization you hate (i.e., to an “anti-charity”), you find the mere possibility of donating to your anti-charity morally reprehensible. What do you do? Do you choose the anti-charity contract?

Anti-Charity Contract Selection Rates by Study

Study	N	Design	Choosing for Self	Choosing for Other	Choosing for Close Friend	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
1A	252	Incentive-compatible real-effort task	4%	33%	---	5.96	< .001
1B	400	New Year's resolutions	38%	51%	---	2.74	.006
3	1004	Hypothetical weight-loss scenario	41%	50%	---	2.89	.005
4	1106	Hypothetical weight-loss scenario	46%	58%	45%	3.23 [†] 3.41 [‡]	.001 [†] < .001 [‡]

Note: [†]comparison between self and other conditions; [‡]comparison between friend and other conditions

Ratings From Study 3



Key Findings

- Participants are more likely to choose anti-charity commitment contracts for others than for themselves
- Participants view anti-charity contracts as more effective than pro-charity contracts, but also as less appropriate
- The self-other difference in contract preference is fully mediated by differences in how effective participants believe the contracts will be for themselves versus for another person ($b = 0.069$, $SE = 0.017$, $p < .001$)
- When participants choose a contract for someone they know well, the self-other difference largely disappears