

# ARE WEALTHIER PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO SHARE?



**Lynn Tan**, a *SMU PhD candidate in Psychology*, is working on research that suggests that rich people are more likely to share when population density is high.

[Read more here.](#)

## The Experiment



i. Two groups of participants were asked to rate their subjective wealth on a scale of one (*low socio-economic status*) to ten (*high socio-economic status*) relative to other Singaporeans.

ii. One group was shown pictures of empty spaces in Singapore. Another group of participants was shown pictures of crowds.

iii. Both groups were given a hypothetical \$10 and asked to decide how much to give to a randomly assigned partner versus keeping for themselves.



**It was found that among those who were shown images of crowds (versus empty spaces), those with higher ratings of their wealth gave a dollar more on average vis-à-vis those who were shown empty spaces.**

## The 'Why'

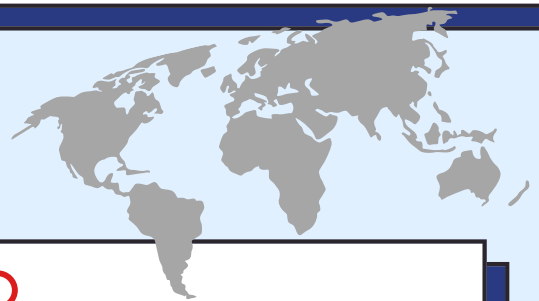


People react psychologically to ecological cues such that they will only cooperate when it benefits them. One such circumstance is under high population density, where social capital and reputation are crucial for long-term survival.



### Low Population Density

Reputational information doesn't spread as fast, hence people who have more money are not motivated to be more cooperative because they don't need to 'maintain their reputation'.



### High Population Density

There is more interconnectivity in communication, so people need to be more careful about their reputation.

It seems that when our human psychology detects high density, it automatically motivates behaviours that puts us in a good light, especially when we have money to afford it.