

A. GARY ANDERSON
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS
RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

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**Theories of Commitment, Altruism and Reciprocity:
Evidence from Linear Public Goods Games**

Abstract

Theories of commitment, altruism and reciprocity have all been invoked to explain and describe observed behavior in public goods and social dilemma situations. In particular, commitment theories have been used to explain behaviors like water conservation and voting. Theories of altruism and applied in explanation of contributions to charities intergenerational transfers and bequests. And theories of

reciprocity have been invoked to explain gift exchange and labor market decisions. This paper describes a set of experiments which distinguish between these competing theories by testing their comparative statics predictions in a linear public goods setting. Results provide strong support for reciprocity theories over either theories of commitment or of altruism.

Friday, March 2, 2001, 11 am–12:30 pm
Room 021, Anderson Hall, UC Riverside

Copies of the paper to be presented are available at <http://www.goldmark.org/livia/misc/croson.rtf> or from Prof. Lívia Markóczy, Livia.Markoczy@ucr.edu, Anderson Hall, Rm 221, 787-3908