

COOPERATORS AS EFFICIENCY LOVERS? - EVIDENCE FROM A PUBLIC GOOD EXPERIMENT

by

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Abstract

Voluntary contributions in public goods games are generally attributed to conditional cooperation. In order to test whether conditional cooperation not only organizes the data well but can be interpreted as motivating force behind cooperation, we design two experiments that eliminate cooperation out of conditional motives. In the first experiment the social value orientations of the participants are elicited. The second experiment consist of an asymmetric 3 person linear public good game. Instead of an asymmetry in the marginal per capita returns, the asymmetry in our game is in contribution efficiencies. Participants classified as cooperators in the first experiment are assigned to the role of the most efficient potential contributor. In order to guarantee that cooperation does not emanate from conditional motivations, the contribution factors of the other two participants are chosen such that contribution is particularly punishing for them. In addition, the 6 rounds of the game are conducted in an absolute stranger design. Despite the rather adverse conditions, we find substantial efficiency enhancing contributions mainly emanating from the participants with "high" contribution efficiencies. Our results suggest that voluntary contributions cannot exclusively be explained by conditional motives and may at least partially be motivated by concerns for efficiency.