

## **Signaling and Cooperation**

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Cooperation is essential to social life, but cooperative behavior often hinges on expectations that others will also be willing to set aside their own self-interest. Given uncertainty about others' behavior, how do individuals determine whether they are likely to cooperate and respond in kind? I present results from two papers that examine the interpersonal cues people use to infer that others are cooperative and demonstrate how those cues influence people's own behavior. The first paper finds that status signaling through conspicuous consumption increases perceptions of self-interest, reducing the likelihood of cooperation. Specifically, conspicuous consumers are perceived as less moral and less cooperative, and are thus less preferred as partners in cooperative tasks. The second paper investigates how people make inferences about others' cooperative intentions from their decision processes, and finds that a reliance on emotion rather than reason is thought to signal that one is likely to cooperate. Moreover, individuals' behavioral responses towards others' displays of emotion and reason depend on their own decision mode: those who rely on emotion tend to conditionally cooperate (that is, cooperate only when they believe that their partner has cooperated), whereas those who rely on reason tend to defect regardless of their partner's behavior. These findings shed light on the behaviors perceived as signals of cooperative intentions and how.