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## **The Psychological Underpinnings of Cooperation and the Punishment of Non-Cooperators: Insights from the Lab to the Field**

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## The Psychological Underpinnings of Cooperation and the Punishment of Non-Cooperators

*Insights from the Lab to the Field*

Cooperation is a cornerstone of human societies, but there are many instances in which it breaks down—from minor daily conflicts to large-scale challenges such as human-caused environmental degradation. Researchers across multiple disciplines—social psychology, behavioral economics, evolutionary biology—have identified mechanisms that can promote cooperation and help avert ‘tragedies of the commons.’ This dissertation attempts to contribute in multiple ways to our understanding of cooperation and the mechanisms that can support it. First, acknowledging that people can experience a great diversity of interdependent situations—especially in field settings—this dissertation provides an empirical map of the patterns of interdependence in the daily lives of individuals and romantic couples. Further, it examines how people’s perceptions of interdependence across multiple dimensions relate to cooperation in the lab and in the field. Second, considering the pervasiveness and consequences of power asymmetries in social interactions, this dissertation examines how power relates to cooperation and different strategies to promote cooperation and punish norm violations. Third, acknowledging the fundamental role of emotions in motivating punishment of norm violations, this work examines how anger and disgust differentially relate to direct, confrontational punishment versus more indirect punishment, via gossip and social exclusion. Finally, the dissertation further probes the distinction between direct and indirect strategies to punish offenders and investigates how a host of factors—including the severity and self-relevance of violations, and the interpersonal value of offenders—influence punishment in daily life.

Findings show that people’s decisions to cooperate and to punish non-cooperators are dependent on:

- (a) multiple features of interdependence—mutual dependence, conflict, and power—which may interact to promote or hinder cooperation;
- (b) various contextual cues, such as relationship dynamics, which may alter the costs and benefits of punishment; and
- (c) distinct emotions, such as anger and disgust, which motivate different punishment responses to non-cooperation.

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