

Cooperation, communication and altruism from an evolutionary perspective

August 3 2023



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Altruistic behavior often comes at a personal cost, but there are also benefits. The person you help might return the favor directly—tit-for-tat. Or, people might talk about your good deeds, and reciprocity could

come via a third party.

In a recent paper published in *Evolution and Human Behavior*, SFI Graduate Fellow Victor Odouard and former Applied Complexity Fellow Michael Price explore the [communication systems](#) necessary to sustain indirect reciprocity.

The authors propose three conditions that can maintain stable, truthful communication. First, norms should prescribe behaviors that are rewarded. Second, the communication system should be used for disseminating information about both the altruism of actions and the truthfulness of communication. Third, people can make mistakes—and those errors can create stability by introducing diversity.

"As institutions, legal systems, and governments develop, the role of the third party, and therefore, communication, only increases," the authors write. "It is therefore vital to understand how a communication system maintaining all of this social information could possibly be stable."

More information: Victor Vikram Odouard et al, Tit for tattling: Cooperation, communication, and how each could stabilize the other, *Evolution and Human Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.06.002](#)

Provided by Santa Fe Institute

Citation: Cooperation, communication and altruism from an evolutionary perspective (2023, August 3) retrieved 25 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-08-cooperation-communication-altruism-evolutionary-perspective.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.