

## **“Visibility and Economic Behavior”**

We empirically study the socio-cultural visibility of economic activities, roughly defined as the speed with which members of society notice an individual's engagement in different activities. In a modern market economy--the U.S.--we focus on consumption activities. We show that, consistent with a conspicuous consumption model a la Veblen, income elasticities and consumption patterns over time can be predicted from a survey-based measure of the visibility of consumer expenditures. In a pre-market economy--a native society of foragers-farmers in the Bolivian Amazon--we focus on activities such as fishing, hunting, and harvesting. Overall, we provide evidence consistent with a strong social signaling motivation in economic behavior.