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## Intermediate social bonds and the evolution of reproductive cooperation

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Reproductive cooperation represents one of the most surprising behaviours. Individuals forego their reproductive output (partially or entirely) and instead cooperate with other members of their social group in raising their offspring. Theoretical basis of reproductive cooperation in kin groups was laid out in the form of kin-selection theory. However, we still have little knowledge of the exact evolutionary paths that led to its evolution, and many existing results are conflicting and ambiguous. Here, I show how family groups may have constituted an important intermediate step in the evolution of social cooperation. More broadly, I show how social groups of intermediate strength may have acted as a trigger in the evolution of highly integrated assemblages of individual entities from simple, loose ones.

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