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FirstScience News

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The hitchhiker's guide to altruism -- Study explains how costly traits evolve - 19 Jan 2007

By University of Chicago Press Journals Page 2 of 2

New research carried out at the University of Edinburgh and Queen's University, Canada shows that both processes are governed by the same equations. This reveals that kin selection can be seen as a special form of genetic hitchhiking, explain Gardner and his coauthors Stuart West and Nick Barton (University of Edinburgh) in the February issue of The American Naturalist.

The researchers built on a general framework for modeling hitchhiking first proposed by Barton and colleagues, showing how it can be used to describe social evolution and recovering the classical results of kin selection theory. This insight raises the possibility of using the tools of hitchhiking theory to explore social problems that have so far been too complicated to analyze using traditional kin selection techniques.

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Founded in 1867, The American Naturalist is one of the world's most renowned, peer-reviewed publications in ecology, evolution, and population and integrative biology research. AN emphasizes sophisticated methodologies and innovative theoretical syntheses--all in an effort to advance the knowledge of organic evolution and other broad biological principles.

Gardner, Andy, Stuart A. West, and Nicholas H. Barton. "The relation between multilocus population genetics and social evolution theory." The American Naturalist. February 2007.

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