



The Origins and Nature of Sociality

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Scientific developments have increasingly been transforming our understanding of the place of human beings in nature. The study of humanity, carried out in a variety of disciplines from anthropology and paleontology to genetics and neurosciences, is shedding new light on the origins and biological bases of human nature and culture. The findings of these relatively new hyphenated sciences have profound implications for the interpretation of human behavior within spiritual life no less than the material culture. This fine compendium serves as a splendid introduction to sociobiology. Sociobiology, now frequently being referred to by many as evolutionary psychology and evolutionary anthropology, first offered a radically selfish and individualist account of human nature. However, later researchers have moved away from such reductionisms, and into a sense of the common good that characterizes many species, and human brings as well. The emergence of discourses on the role of religion in understanding behavior in terms of moral considerations that permit people to live in community contexts has generated a lively examination within the new social sciences on the source of instinct, impulse, intelligence and interest. This compendium is clearly etched in a new and generous vision of human behavior that is at the same time rooted in the best of the current social sciences. *The Origins and Nature of Sociality* comes out of a symposium sponsored by the Program for Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and co-chaired by the editors. The contributors focus on the current status of research on sociality and the evolution of cooperative and altruistic behavior in nonhuman and human primates. They examine questions related to the evolution, cultural viability, and hormonal underpinnings of human sociality in specific detail, and describe patterns of sociality among nonhuman primates that many shed light on human social behavior. *Robert W. Sussman* is professor of anthropology, at Washington University in St. Louis. His work has appeared, among other places, in *The American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *Folia Primatology*, and *Zygon*. *Audrey R. Chapman* serves as director of the Science and Human Rights program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Washington D.C.

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