The key insight is that the total size of population that can be supported depends on the proportion of cooperators: more cooperation means more food for all and a larger population. If, due to chance, there is a random increase in the number of cheats then there is not enough food to go around and total population size will decrease. Conversely, a random decrease in the number of cheats will allow the population to grow to a larger size, disproportionally benefitting the cooperators. In this way, the cooperators are favoured by chance, and are more likely to win in the long term.

Chimpanzees choose cooperation over competition

Study challenges distinctiveness of human cooperation

Date: August 22, 2016

Source: Emory Health Sciences

Summary: Tasks that require chimpanzees to work together preferred five-fold, despite opportunities for competition, aggression and freeloading.