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Chapter 6 returns to the role played by kinship in structuring human adaptations through time. This chapter explores how kinship has been historically portrayed in anthropological theory and how notions about ancient subsistence patterns, innate dominance, inclusive fitness, and biobehavioral traits shared with contemporary apes have biased our perception of Paleolithic social life. Prevailing theories are reviewed and critiqued, and new genomic evidence is introduced that sheds light on the potential nature of early hominin social groups.

Finally, Chapter 7 addresses the long-standing debate among anthropologists and sociobiologists on the antecedents of matrilineal, patrilineal, and bilateral kinship systems. Kinship is examined as a technology for human niche construction that has allowed humans to manage the two basic elements of fitness—food and sex—by structuring their mating relationships and their social groups in a manner that optimized the recovery of energy and other fitness-related resources in a given ecological setting. The author's perspective on factors that select for uterine and agnatic organization is explored by noting their distinct architectures for structuring reproductive, labor, and political groups in relation to available resources. The chapter explores both the origins and resiliency of matrilineal and patrilineal systems and how these variable strategies for niche construction have responded to change in the post-Neolithic era.

This book will be guided by the initial assumptions presented here. Its story on the origins and nature of human sociality blends mainstream theory and empirical data with some nuanced plot twists. To the extent that its conclusions challenge popular notions about our evolutionary past, the reader is reminded that this endeavor naturally summons a number of theanthropic questions, the answers to which *no one really knows for sure*.